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General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-eighth session

107th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 9 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/68/716/Add.11)

The President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/68/716/Add.11, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/68/716/Add.10, Yemen has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/68/L.57/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly adopted resolution 68/6 under agenda item 14 and agenda item 118, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", at its 32nd plenary meeting, on 9 October 2013, and considered agenda item 14, jointly with agenda item 118 and agenda item 125, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", at its 54th plenary meeting, on 20 November 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make this introduction on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77).

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the commitment of all States members of the Group and other States that helped to improve this important draft resolution (A/68/L.57/Rev.1), demonstrating thereby their genuine commitment to building an international financial system in which the rules are fair and favourable towards development, and promoting a genuine global alliance in which developing countries will be able to achieve sustainable development.

I would also like to thank the representatives of the Member States among us today, and in particular the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Argentina, Mr. Héctor Marcos Timerman, for their presence here.

The Group of 77 and China is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1, entitled "Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes". The operative part of the draft resolution, inter alia, emphasizes the special importance of a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt

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problems of developing countries in order to promote their inclusive economic growth and development. It calls for an intensification of efforts to prevent debt crises by enhancing international financial mechanisms for crisis prevention and resolution, in cooperation with the private sector, with a view to finding solutions acceptable to all. It decides to elaborate and adopt through a process of intergovernmental negotiations, as a matter of priority during its sixty-ninth session, a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes with a view, inter alia, to increasing the efficiency, stability and predictability of the international financial system and achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities. It also decides to define the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations and the adoption of the text of the multilateral legal framework at the main part of the sixty-ninth session, before the end of 2014.

A debate has been going on since 1970 on whether the international financial system should have a mechanism for addressing the restructuring of sovereign debt. Twelve years ago, at the first International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, our leaders expressed their commitment to working to create an international mechanism for renegotiating debt. A similar commitment was made at the second Conference, held in Doha in 2008. Furthermore, at the conclusion of the 2009 Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis, we reaffirmed the importance of exploring "enhanced approaches to the restructuring of sovereign debt" (*resolution 63/303, para. 34*). At that time, a committee of experts appointed by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session made specific recommendations for establishing an international bankruptcy court. The Secretary-General's reports on external debt, sustainability and development have also stressed for many years the importance of addressing this issue and have made recommendations on establishing a specific mechanism. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has also been considering the matter since the end of the 1970s.

In the past decade, the G-77 and China has called for proposals on establishing a legal framework for restructuring sovereign debt. In June in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, the Heads of State and Government of the G-77 and China agreed on the urgent need for the international community to examine options for an international mechanism for resolving debt that is effective, fair, lasting, independent and oriented towards development, and urged all countries to promote and contribute to debates in the United Nations and other relevant forums about this goal.

As the Secretary-General's latest report (A/69/167) indicates, the recent debt crises and the protracted holdout bondholder litigation against Argentina have led to intensified international debate on the need for a sovereign debt restructuring mechanism that can help improve efficiency, fairness and coordination in restructuring sovereign debt. Today it is Argentina, but many developing and developed countries have suffered in the past from the exact same predatory behaviour, and others will follow if we do not act. Debt and debt restructuring do not simply pose a financial, legal or even jurisdictional problem; this is a problem that concerns the whole world and every country, developed as well as developing. It is tied to growth, development and human rights. The lack of a structured mechanism is a major failure in the current international financial architecture, which leads to long delays in debt restructuring, unfair outcomes and loss of value for both debtors and creditors, among other problems.

The international community must realize that no path to growth can be pursued or encouraged when it has unsustainable debt hanging over it. The core element of any debt-restructuring exercise should therefore be determining real repayment capacity. If that is not properly addressed, the original restructuring may require more time and further restructuring, which can further affect growth and good-faith creditors.

The Group of 77 and China is very concerned about so-called vulture fund litigation. Debt restructuring processes and debt sustainability itself are at present facing serious risks, related to the actions of speculators seeking to profit excessively from countries dealing with excessive debt obligations and repayment processes, which put them in vulnerable situations. Sovereign debt management has in fact been a crucial issue for developing countries, both as a source of concern in past decades and as a hot button in recent years, owing to the activities of vulture funds. Recent developments in and examples of such activities have exposed these funds' speculative and profit-seeking nature, and they pose a risk to all future debt-restructuring processes for both developing and developed countries. The Group

of 77 and China believes that vulture funds should not be allowed to paralyse developing countries' efforts in this area, and that their claims should not take precedence over a State's right to protect its people under international law.

Recent events have also shown that market-based, ad hoc, contractual approaches to working out sovereign debt are insufficient to deal with such crises, and can lead to cascades of litigation, with ripple effects throughout the debt market. As we have said, the situation we are dealing with today affects every country, developing or developed, and demonstrates that the market approach has failures and gaps that should be urgently addressed.

The G-77 and China would like to reaffirm that the United Nations plays the central role in and possesses the necessary legitimacy for dealing with these issues of development and related matters. We reiterate that the General Assembly is the appropriate venue for discussing economic and financial affairs and deciding on the best follow-up and alternatives for meeting the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. The systemic problems facing the global economy have yet to be resolved. There are still major unfulfilled goals to be reached, and we must intensify all our efforts in this area. We cannot afford to continue to be spectators until another situation arises and we are once again reminded of the importance of taking action on this issue.

In conclusion, I would like to specially thank the Argentine Republic, since it is owing to the situation of that country that the international community's eyes have been opened to an enormous risk. That is why the Group of 77 and China is presenting this draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1, entitled "Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes", I wish to put on the record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In paragraphs 5 and 6 of draft resolution A/68/57/Rev.1, the Assembly would decide to elaborate and adopt, through a process of intergovernmental negotiations, as a matter of priority during its sixty-ninth session, a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes, with a view, inter alia, to increasing the efficiency, stability and predictability of the international financial system, and achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities; and would decide to define modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations and adopt the text of a multilateral legal framework at the main part of its sixty-ninth session before the end of 2014.

Pursuant to operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution, the modalities of the negotiation and adoption of the multilateral legal framework have yet to be defined. Accordingly, in the absence of the modalities for the framework, it is not possible at the present time to estimate the potential financial implications. As soon as specifications on the dates, format, scope and modalities are determined by the General Assembly at the main part of the sixty-ninth session, the Secretary-General would submit the relevant costs of such requirements in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Accordingly, the adoption of the draft resolution A/68/57/Rev.1 will not give rise to any financial implications for the programme budget for the biennium of 2014-2015.

The President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): Draft resolution A/68/57/Rev.1 addresses a very real problem. Only this summer, the Secretary-General concluded in a report on external debt sustainability and development that

> "[t]he international ad hoc arrangements for debt crisis resolution have created incoherence and unpredictability. Different courts have very different interpretations of the same contractual clause and can impose a wide array of rulings. Politics and interest groups can impact on the outcome of the rulings and debt restructuring,

compromising consistency and fairness." (*A/69/167, para. 57*)

In Iceland's view, it is highly relevant and timely to carefully explore sovereign debt restructuring processes, and we commend those State, Members of the United Nations that have raised the issue. It is of great importance that the restructuring of sovereign debt not be unreasonably impeded by commercial creditors, particularly by specialized investors such as hedge funds and the so-called vulture funds.

However, the question remains: What would be the right and proper international forum for this important issue? It is clear that a broad consensus is needed in order to find a sustainable and effective solution. It is also clear that further work is needed in order to achieve such a consensus, and therefore we abstain from voting on the draft resolution at this juncture.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The debt market is a significant component of contemporary international currency credit relations. Its sustainability greatly defines the stability of the whole international financial system. The severe debt crises of recent years have clearly reflected shortfalls in our efforts and continued significant gaps in the existing regulatory system for public debt liability.

The Russian Federation actively supports improving predictability in the area of public debt liabilities and stands ready to make its practical contribution to supporting that issue. In that regard, we believe that the decision of the Group of 77 to raise in the United Nations the issue of developing a multilateral legal framework to regulate sovereign debt restructuring processes is justified and timely. We therefore support draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1 and will vote in favour of its adoption.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Japan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/68/L.57/Rev.1 was adopted by 124 votes to 11, with 41 abstentions (resolution 68/304).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The United States remains committed to the stability of the international financial system and to the development of its partners around the world. Financing is a crucial tool for that growth and development. Access to functioning debt markets enables developing countries to make the infrastructure investments essential to diversify economies and expand productive capacity. In that context, the United States regrets that it was obliged to vote against resolution 68/304 on both substantive and procedural grounds.

The United States cannot support the creation of a sovereign debt restructuring mechanism, as envisioned in this resolution. The establishment of a statutory mechanism for debt restructurings would create uncertainty in financial markets. If lenders face higher uncertainty regarding repayment, they may be less likely to provide financing and will likely charge higher risk premiums, potentially stifling financing to developing countries.

Experience from the debate on an sovereign debt restructuring mechanism in the early 2000s reflected those concerns and concluded that the creation of such a mechanism would have highly uncertain results. Issuers of external debt, working with market participants and members of the Group of 10, instead elected to pursue market-oriented approaches, including the increasingly common use of collective action clauses, paired with enhancing debt management capacity in borrowing countries. Work on this technically complex issue is ongoing in other forums, including the International Monetary Fund and non-governmental bodies such as the International Capital Market Association. Those efforts have already begun to bear fruit and are the more appropriate venues for this type of discussion and better ways to address the issue.

The United States is also concerned about the procedures surrounding the resolution. The resolution clearly assumes a final outcome, namely the establishment of a binding convention or legal framework, precluding substantive debate on its merits. Effective discussion is further inhibited by the attempt to force this resolution through in the waning hours of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly and mandating an accelerated time frame for developing any convention or legal framework.

Finally, the resolution should give pause to those concerned about how United Nations system resources are deployed. The resolution establishes a mandate for an expensive United Nations process. However, its deliberate lack of specificity and the timing of its introduction, with the Fifth Committee out of session and no meetings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions scheduled this cycle, will mean no effective scrutiny or review of costs. Members are being asked to write a blank check.

In sum, we have a range of objections to the resolution and therefore have joined others in voting against it.

Ms. Miyano (Japan): I, too, would like to explain the reasoning behind Japan's vote against resolution 68/304. The issue of sovereign debt is an extremely important issue. Japan has been taking part in and contributing to the relevant discussions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Paris Club, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other forums, and we will continue to do so. Japan has also been doing its utmost to deal with individual debt issues in a constructive and productive manner.

However, discussions on what kind of framework should be employed to deal with the issue of sovereign debt require technical expertise and knowledge, along with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. A lack of proper and effective discussion time and procedure adds to that problem. So at this juncture, when such discussions are under way in forums such as the IMF, Japan cannot support a resolution that has as its sole expected outcome the establishment of a general legal framework.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. We shall now open the floor for statements after adoption.

Mr. Timerman (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On this day, 9 September, 50 years ago, an Argentinian diplomat, José María Ruda, made a historic statement to the Decolonization Committee in which he explained my country's opposition to all forms of colonialism. Once again, just as 50 years ago, the Argentine people have come to the United Nations to discuss a subject of great importance for my country and the entire international community. We are proud that this is happening as a result of the deep understanding shared by the developing countries of the world. We have come to the United Nations because we feel it is the most representative international forum and the General Assembly is the democratic forum par excellence, as all States participate in it on an equal footing.

I would like to recognize your leadership, Sir, as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, and your initiative to convene this plenary meeting in full accordance with the rules of procedure and in complete transparency. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 68/304, submitted by the Group of 77 and China. This is a forum like no other, which has been able to highlight the devastating effects of the unfair distribution of global wealth and which is able to propose valuable initiatives aimed at building a world that is more just and free and has more solidarity.

In that respect, I would like to commend the leadership of the Chairperson of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Sacha Llorentty Soliz, who has fully expressed the wishes of our Group. We will not accept distorting pressure, and we will not give in to the scepticism and indifference of the wealthy.

The important vote that we have just taken is the clearest possible expression of such global representativeness. The peoples of the world have spoken, and we have decided that the time has come to jointly embark upon an ethical, political and legal process that can put an end to unbridled speculation. In so doing, we are choosing a just and lawful path that is set out by means of a plural and democratic debate, a debate such as this one, where everyone — and I mean everyone — has a vote and a voice.

The resolution just adopted is also a faithful reflection of the relevance and urgency that the clear majority of the nations of the world assign to a reality that leaves us without protection from the practices of and abuses committed by speculators, given the normative gap in the current international financial system. We have decided that the time has come to provide to the financial system a legal framework for restructuring sovereign debt that respects the majority of creditors and allows countries to emerge from crises in a sustainable manner.

Billions of dollars are going into the pockets of the owners of vulture funds because of that legal vacuum. The vacuum's existence is no mere coincidence. Those who are involved in such trade, which is scandalously profitable, invest a percentage of their profits in campaigns and lobbyists to ensure that the situation does not change. The lack of a legal regulatory framework to restructure sovereign debt has a direct correlation with poverty, disease, illiteracy and the insecurity suffered by countries who have been historically crushed by external debt — countries where none of the owners of such funds, or their lobbyists or lawyers, live.

For over a decade, developing countries, as well as many developed countries that do not believe that the dignity of peoples should be held hostage to the invisible hand of the market, have been stating that the world cannot allow the restructuring of sovereign debt to be subject to the discretion or will of speculators. We have to put a limit on it, a limit that goes beyond mere rhetoric and guidelines and principles. For over a decade in various forums and agencies of this Organization, both developed and developing countries have been expressing the need for a legal framework that will establish effective and transparent rules in order to bring about sovereign debt restructuring processes that are ordered and predictable.

Allow me to address my remarks particularly and with full respect to the countries that did not vote for the resolution that we just adopted, specifically those where the majority of international financial activity is centred. I would like to remind them of the words of our President — words that she has uttered many times in this very place. She said we all know that finance is not possible without production. A bankrupt country cannot pay back what it owes. Developed countries benefit from the growth of developing countries, not just because of the virtuous cycle that is started by more countries joining in global demand, but specifically because a more inclusive, just and secure world presupposes the existence of a global economy that is more balanced and more efficient. At the same time, we all know that many countries over the past 200 years have gone into default and, at the end of the day, have needed to restructure their sovereign debt. We also know — and this is simply a fact — that there are many nations that have higher levels of debt than Argentina's when we went into default in 2001.

It is therefore clear that there is also a latent need in the short term for those countries to benefit from a predictable, fair and sustainable system for sovereign debt restructuring. I also think it is timely to stress with regard to financial investment that, in the light of the case of Argentina, the absence of a legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring has become a serious problem for investment funds, since the majority of them recognize the merit of respecting an agreement with a majority of creditors. In that regard, I believe that nothing shows more clearly the need for a legal regulatory framework than the situation my country is

going through since a judge in this very city allowed 1 per cent of the creditors — international usurers known as vulture funds — to block the funds that Argentina paid to 92.4 per cent of the creditors who agreed to the restructuring that was part of the economic recovery of my country.

Our concern is nothing new, and it has been expressed previously in other forums and in every way possible, as described by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China when he introduced the resolution just adopted. Since 2003, we have been working at the United Nations on the issue of sovereign debt and the obstacles that it represents for the sustainable development of peoples and the absence of an adequate legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring.

The decision we took today democratically is not only to express what our peoples demand but also to do what our peoples deserve, namely, to ensure that they are free and sovereign and that they can live a dignified life and without fear of becoming victims of speculation and greed. We have decided to fundamentally change the future and prevent more people from having to eternally pay in hunger and misery the exorbitant privileges of the owners of vulture funds, those sinister masters of opulence.

If the United Nations has been able to regulate diplomatic relations covering exploitation of marine resources, for example, and the need to have a regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to universally condemn the worst crimes, how were we not going to decide what we have done today, that is, to draw up a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring?

Honouring those who have preceded us, I am convinced that with the adoption of today's resolution we have undertaken the commitment of the hour, recognizing the right of everyone, particular our children and young people, to live a better present and future, removing one of the causes that contributes to generating the violence that we are so concerned about and which destroys the peace that we so urgently need. Let us work together to continue building a free, fair and sovereign world.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the European Union.

There should be no doubt that we recognize the importance of sovereign debt restructuring, which is not pertinent only to certain countries. We ourselves have been seriously affected, whether on the creditor or debtor side. However, we regrettably were not in a position to support resolution 68/304, entitled "Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes", as we have serious concerns about its substance and significant objections about the process of its adoption, especially with respect to the rush with which that complex proposal was launched and to the predetermined outcomes it prescribes.

Together with many other Member States represented here today, we are actively engaging in ongoing discussions that address and seek to identify solutions to the issues of sovereign debt restructuring. In particular, we are actively participating in the ongoing work of the International Monetary Fund on the contractual framework for addressing collective action problems in sovereign debt restructuring. We are also actively engaged in the Paris Club and the discussions on debt restructuring in that forum.

In last year's resolution on external debt sustainability and development, we also agreed to request that the Secretary-General provide

> "a comprehensive and substantive analysis of the external debt situation of developing countries and options for enhanced approaches to debt restructuring and resolution mechanisms that take into account the multiple dimensions of debt sustainability" (*resolution 68/202, para. 38*).

We look forward to discussing that report and its recommendations.

Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, in its recent report of 8 August 2014, stresses that it is

> "important for the international community to continue ongoing efforts to enhance the existing architecture for sovereign debt restructuring".

It also notes that

> "[d]iscussions on how to improve the framework for sovereign debt restructuring for countries in debt distress taking place in various official forums, in policy think tanks and in the private sector".

However, as we very much value multilateral solutions and strive to reach consensus solutions to common problems, and as we recognize the seriousness of the matter at hand, we cannot understand why the

decision to establish a multilateral framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes is rushed through the General Assembly at the very end of the session, with only a few days available to consider the proposal. In addition, the lack of information about the possible elements of the proposed framework, but with an end result that is determined in advance of the negotiation, makes it very difficult to respond in the manner that the proposing countries would like.

The decision on the relative merit of pursuing a multilateral legal framework requires much deliberation in our capitals and for us collectively within the European Union. We have not been afforded such a possibility, which thus makes it impossible for us to support the resolution.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has been an integral participant in the discussions on the draft resolution introduced by the Group of 77 and China and adopted today as resolution 68/304. We would now like to make some comments in our national capacity.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina for his presence and our dear Ambassador Marita and her entire team, who have given our countries a new space within the Organization. We would also like to thank the Chair of the Group of 77 and China and his team for their efforts in maintaining the unity and solidarity of the Group in the light of the importance of this subject for the future of our peoples.

In paragraph 3 of Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, it is stated that one of the purposes of the Organization is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems, including those of an economic nature. The General Assembly is the sole universal body with equal representation of all Member States and which has the ability to solve various problems. Therefore, it is the appropriate forum for holding these debates and adopting resolutions such as resolution 68/304, which is intended to fill in the global legal vacuum with regard to sovereign debt restructuring.

The resolution just adopted is a reflection not only of our concerns with regard to the problems being faced by our dear brother, the Argentine Republic, but of the concerns and problems that all countries that have suffered from the impacts of external debt have faced and could face again at any time. It is a safeguard for the future of our peoples.

Sovereign debt is supposed to be directed essentially towards funding national policies for social development. However, in most cases it can throw millions of people into poverty if it is not managed properly, in particular if it leads to a debt crisis, as we have seen in many countries. The debt crisis can, and indeed does, have far-reaching and profound implications for global financial stability and economic growth and for the achievement of the economic, social and cultural rights of peoples. We reaffirm the need to ensure national sovereignty in sovereign debt restructuring processes and, in accordance with the agreements reached between creditors and debtors, for payment flows to be distributed to cooperative creditors, as agreed with them under the established debt realignment process.

Today's adoption of the resolution by the vast majority of the international community encourages us to continue to work for the necessary legal framework of our countries, in order for our countries to deal with the sudden onset, impact and threats of possible future crises such as that now facing the sisterly Argentine Republic, to which, as always, we reiterate our support and unconditional solidarity in the face of such vulture funds.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We support the adoption at the current session of resolution 68/304 on sovereign debt, introduced by the Group of 77 and China.

The debt problem is a major obstacle facing developing countries in promoting economic growth and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Since the international financial crisis, developing countries have faced greater difficulties with debt sustainability. The international community should take steps to improve international financial governance and to prevent speculative capital from obstructing sovereign debt restructuring so that countries can be more resilient and maintain financial stability. China shares and supports the concern expressed by the representative of Argentina on that point. We hope that the issue can be properly addressed.

China believes that the international financial system needs further reform and that the international

regulations governing sovereign debt restructuring should be further improved in order for emerging markets and developing countries to have greater input. We hope that the international community will work together to create conditions conducive to debt reduction by developing countries and to promote the early re-establishment of a fair, effective and development-oriented mechanism for international debt restructuring and debt resolution.

Mr. Iziraren (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to make some comments in my national capacity following the introduction of and vote on resolution 68/304, introduced by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Developing countries continue to suffer from debt. In 2013, the debt level rose by 8.7 per cent compared with that of 2012. Such deterioration in the debt level of developing countries comes at a time when global economic growth has slowed. That makes those countries even more vulnerable to external economic crises and shocks. It is clear that the debt burden is preventing developing countries from finding the resources to promote economic growth, which would generate jobs and help to combat poverty and inequality. In general, debt crises gives rise to lower investment and public spending in sectors that primarily affect poor people, such as health care and education.

The speculative activities of certain funds, in particular vulture funds, should be regulated so as not to hamper State debt restructuring efforts for the benefit of development. Ensuring the sustainability of external debt and the capacity of States to meet their debt commitments are crucial elements for the effective implementation of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, we regret the lack of consensus on the resolution, since we believe that the existence of a multilateral State sovereign debt restructuring mechanism on the basis of the internationally agreed principles and processes is an important step for the fair and transparent management of the sovereign debt issue.

Furthermore, we think that it is time to establish an international mechanism that allows for State debt restructuring on the basis of realistic and lasting solutions that take into account the capacity of such States to service their debt and their sustainable development needs.

Morocco voted in favour of the resolution on the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes in the conviction of the General Assembly's competence to address the crucial sustainable development issues facing States. Sovereign debt restructuring is a major challenge to development that requires urgent action by the international community.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also congratulate and thank Argentina for its initiative.

My delegation supports the commitment and unshakeable resolve shown in acting positively with regard to the adoption of resolution 68/304, which establishes a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes. In the past, developing countries have called for the establishment of a debt restructuring mechanism. The absence of a debt crisis resolution mechanism has led to too little debt restructuring. A mechanism for sovereign debt restructuring would allow a country to approach institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and to request a temporary standstill on the payment of its debt. During that time, the country would negotiate a rescheduled time frame or restructuring with its creditors. It is important to note that previous efforts at restructuring have had mixed results with formal statutory initiatives, such as the sovereign debt restructuring mechanism, not being successful due to a lack of buy-in by stakeholders.

The resolution before us provides an opportunity to forge a multilateral commitment to ensure that sovereign debt crises are dealt with in a structured manner going forward. My delegation firmly believes that the United Nations is the relevant forum to discuss that issue of critical importance. The resolution recognizes the urgent need to enhance the coherence, governance and consistency of the international monetary and financial system.

The United Nations is well positioned to undertake various reform processes aimed at improving and strengthening the effective functioning of the international financial system and architecture. The appearance of vulture funds has also imposed enormous harm on global sovereign debt markets and on those countries whose well-being depends on them. This

gave added impetus to the call made by developing countries in previous United Nations resolutions for enhanced approaches to debt restructuring and resolution mechanisms.

Once again, South Africa reiterates its support for the resolution.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Let me congratulate Ambassador Sacha Llorentty, Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for having so ably guided us, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77), throughout the negotiations that led to the adoption of resolution 68/304.

I would also like to thank the delegation of Argentina, under the leadership of its Foreign Minister, Ambassador Héctor Timerman, and its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Marita Perceval, for drawing the attention of developing and developed nations alike to the critical issue of sovereign debt restructuring.

Brazil believes that the resolution should have been adopted by consensus. We underline the G-77 and China's initiative to engage in consultations on the importance of following up on an issue with evident systemic implications, especially at a time when Member States are negotiating a development agenda for the coming decades. We highlight the Group's flexibility in postponing the definition on modalities to the next session, thus setting in motion the negotiating process without prejudging its final outcome. The idea of a proposed multilateral legal framework on debt restructuring was yet another demonstration of flexibility.

We were surprised by allegations that this topic was not suitable for treatment at the United Nations. Development has never been a taboo issue for the General Assembly, including in its aspects related to debt sustainability and debt restructuring. The resolution we have just adopted builds on the treatment given to this issue in annual resolutions within the Second Committee and at annual special meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as at biannual special meetings of the Assembly on global economic governance.

As we approach the launch of the world's first universal development agenda, the linkage between debt sustainability and sustainable development becomes ever clearer. As the international community organizes itself to subscribe to an ambitious, transformational, sustainable and universal post-2015 development agenda, it must adopt the corresponding ambitious and transformational means of implementing it. Sovereign debt sustainability and restructuring have been portrayed prominently as a critical means of implementation in the outcome document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

The report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing also refers to the issue, stressing the fact that collective action clauses are seen by many analysts as not sufficient to deal with all sovereign debt restructuring cases. The process we have launched today will, hopefully, address this gap, with the timely support and technical expertise of all entities of the United Nations system, especially the International Monetary Fund, UNCTAD and the Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

We encourage delegations that have found it difficult to engage on this topic to reconsider their positions during the next session of the General Assembly in the context of the upcoming definition of modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations and the adoption of a multilateral legal framework on debt restructuring. Brazil will remain constructively engaged on this issue and looks forward to moving ahead on this process in coordination with all Member States and the relevant organizations.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall be brief; at a historic juncture, one can be very direct.

I should like to thank Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman for being with us today. I thank the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China (G-77), Ambassador Sacha Llorentty of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for ably guiding the work of the Group.

Argentina is facing the most negative demonstration of speculative financial power that we have seen. What we have seen is explicit abuse on the part of the vulture funds that are threatening the national economic and financial system of Argentina and many other countries. It is deplorable that a small percentage of financial speculators is continuing to endanger an entire debt-restructuring system, affecting not only

the sovereignty of a nation but also the future of many children, girls, boys and elderly people, in order to promote the enrichment of the few.

The lack of regulation, transparency and accountability in the international financial system has led to the creation of veritable empires that have so much power that they are able to conduct ever-riskier financial operations, knowing full well that it is the people that will have to pay for their bankruptcies, so that the economic system does not collapse. This we know as privatizing profit while socializing losses.

In the light of the founding principles of the United Nations, it is vital that we continue to pool our efforts to promote resolutions of this kind. Unfortunately, we were not able to adopt this resolution by consensus. Nevertheless, Member States have spoken, and we have achieved a majority, which demonstrates the need to reflect and to continue to work constructively on this matter. That is why I urge all Member States to participate in the process of the establishment of a multilateral mechanism for the restructuring of processes of sovereign debt. This is basically what this resolution is proposing, and that is why my country, Ecuador, supported it and voted for it.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank my brother, the Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands, for his leadership of this meeting.

Let me first welcome Héctor Timerman, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Argentina, who honours us with his presence. Once again we express to him our full solidarity with and support for the Argentine people in the face of the aggression they are facing today from the so-called vulture funds. Given their spurious motives and conduct, those who run such funds do not even deserve to be called vultures. Vultures in general terms are scavengers and make a positive contribution to the balance of the ecosystem. These funds are dangerous parasites that threaten the welfare of our peoples.

Today is a historic day for the General Assembly. For the first time, after decades of discussion in the context of the United Nations, this body has been able to adopt a resolution whose aim is to establish, through a democratic, open and transparent negotiation process, a multilateral legal framework for restructuring the external debt of our countries.

The cause that brings us together is familiar to Cuba. The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, said in July 1987:

> "If underdeveloped countries owe more even as they are paying more, it is because the monetary manipulations of the major capitalist Powers are dispossessing them of their own resources, with transnational banks denying them credit when they most need it or granting it under conditions not unlike those set by medieval usurers.
>
> "In the context of the framework of international economic relations, where we see the phenomenon of debt developing, its internal structure and dynamic growth require the creation of more debt in order to pay debt; hence the mathematical and economic impossibility of ever paying off that debt".

For years, our peoples have made enormous sacrifices to honour our foreign financial obligations, thus compromising their right to development and their own minimal living conditions. In contrast, wealthy usurers and speculators have stepped up their ambitions to absurd extremes, profiting from hunger, illiteracy and disease and denying the dream of a better future to our children, women and men.

Along with many other countries of the global South, Cuba supported a draft resolution in the Human Rights Council that established the mandate of the independent expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial State obligations on the full enjoyment of all human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights.

The devastating impact of foreign debt on the enjoyment of human rights by many peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean — and more recently even Europe — demonstrates the urgency and relevance of adopting measures such as resolution 68/304, which we have just adopted.

Foreign debt has become a tool for looting developing countries. We have paid several times over the amount of money we received, and we have not significantly improved the conditions for future payment. The servicing of foreign debt is commandeering resources that are crucial to the South's development. Its diabolical mechanisms have served in several cases to plunder our natural resources and have forced industries that are strategic for the potential

development of our economies to denationalize. Even worse, in extreme cases, payments of those obligations has served to finance wars of imperialist aggression and conquest.

How much progress could have been made in meeting the Millennium Development Goals if developing countries had not been deprived of millions of dollars worth of financial resources that had to be allocated to meet the unfair conditions imposed for the repayment of foreign debt and its servicing? How many millions of children could have been saved from curable diseases? How many millions more would have attended school and fully realized their right to education? How many millions more would have slept happy and kept at bay the insufferable nightmares of a stomach ravaged by hunger?

The law must presuppose justice, rationality and guarantees for the greater good. International law must live up to the requirements of a peaceful world in which full human rights for all is a reality. Today we have made a modest contribution to the achievement of those paradigms.

Cuba is proud to be among the sponsors of today's resolution. We commend the Chair of the Group of 77 and China — Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Solíz — and all the representatives of the brotherly Plurinational State of Bolivia for their leadership of the negotiations.

Although the resolution is too late to provide the multilateral framework of justice Argentina deserves, its adoption confirms the solidarity of the international community with the determination of its leaders in defence of the Argentine people and the rights of the vast majority of creditors who have not colluded to deny a future of progress to the nation of San Martín, the same country that gave birth to and nurtured Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, our beloved Che Guevara.

With the resolution adopted today, we can indeed prevent the attack against the Argentine people from being repeated in future against this country or any other country on Earth. While we cannot ensure that there will be justice for the peoples of the South, we can indeed ensure that we will have made a contribution to establishing a framework to prevent the impunity from which selfish speculators who are wagering on the ruin of our peoples benefit today.

Finally, allow us to dedicate this historic achievement to the grandmothers and mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. In their time, they confronted the tragic silence that surrounded the issue of their disappeared relatives. But, while knowing that they could not bring them back, they also believed that justice was important. Above all, they believed that such an episode should not be repeated, saying "never again". So I conclude my statement by recalling that phrase. Let us hope that what has already happened will never again happen to Argentina or any other people on Earth.

Miss Richards (Jamaica): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to address the important issue of sovereign debt restructuring and debt sustainability. We have been carefully observing recent events, which we believe bring great urgency to the need to address this issue — one that has remained unresolved for far too long. Jamaica shares the concerns of many in the international community, including several eminent economists, that the lack of a statutory international sovereign debt restructuring mechanism risks jeopardizing any prospects for countries in debt distress to reposition their economies on a growth trajectory.

The increased interdependence of the global economy magnifies the impact of both localized and exogenous economic shocks, which can quickly be transmitted from one part of the economic and financial system to another. It is imperative, therefore, that a holistic approach be taken to the restructuring of sovereign debt in a manner that brings increased stability and predictability to the operations of the international monetary and financial system.

Jamaica recognizes the need for a multilateral legal framework on sovereign debt restructuring to address the risks posed to both developing and developed economies. Such a framework should operate in an equitable, timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. We view the General Assembly as an appropriate forum in which to consider this issue, as it has a fundamental impact on the sustainable development objectives and aspirations of Member States.

We do not hold the view that the private market in and of itself is able to fully address the problems of unsustainable sovereign debt owed to private creditors. That is particularly so in cases where the speculative actions of specialized investment funds undertake purchases of distressed sovereign debt on secondary markets at deeply discounted rates for the sole purpose of recouping full value through the pursuit of litigation. That activity is rendered even more pernicious when a minute proportion of creditors are allowed to thwart the desire of the overwhelming majority of investors

to arrive at a structured resolution via an orderly debt resolution.

We also do not subscribe to the view that collective action clauses represent a panacea for the problem as they, though helpful, reflect a piecemeal approach to resolving an issue that requires a more comprehensive remedy. It is for those reasons that Jamaica holds the view that market-based remedies such as collective action clauses should be complemented by international statutory provisions that are undergirded by the force of law.

The link between sovereign debt restructuring and the ability of countries to meet their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda is clear. The inability to undertake orderly sovereign debt workout arrangements within the framework of a predictable and legally binding international sovereign-debt restructuring mechanism will hinder the ability of countries to undertake vital public investment in areas such as health care, education, water and sanitation, and renewable energy.

The value of an approach that provides breathing room for distressed sovereign debtors is clearly evidenced by the success that insolvent private firms have recorded through their recourse to national bankruptcy laws. We are also mindful of the fact that, through the Paris Club arrangements, similar mechanisms are in place to provide relief to debtor countries via arrangements with creditor countries.

It is indisputable that countries that are afforded an opportunity to undertake orderly debt workout arrangements will stand the best chance of stabilizing their economies and regaining macroeconomic balance, thereby providing a platform for economic growth.

Jamaica supports the launching of a process to negotiate a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring and therefore welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/304, which addresses an issue that goes to the heart of the work in which the Assembly has been collectively engaged.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for the manner in which you have led on this important issue. I would also like to thank and welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic, His Excellency Mr. Héctor Marcos Timerman.

El Salvador aligns itself with the statement that was so rightly and clearly delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This afternoon the General Assembly has adopted a historic resolution (resolution 68/304). The efforts of developing countries, in particular of the Group of 77 and China, in support of the text were fuelled by widespread feeling, not only on the part of the financial world but also by debtor States themselves, along with Government and private credit institutions, inter alia, about the lack of international norms and conditions for framing the restructuring of sovereign debt and by the urgency to agree on appropriate ways to address demands for redress when such debts are not repaid.

We believe that the modalities invoked in the normative design for governing sovereign debt, which are to be negotiated subsequently, will affect not only all the countries forced at some point to enter a debt restructuring process but quite probably also future sovereign bond issues. Obviously, that matter will also affect the interests of both public and private creditors and all other agents involved in the process.

It is important to note that resolution 68/304 and the implementation of a mechanism along the lines of the one envisaged is not aimed at creditors as a whole, whether Governments or private bond holders, but rather at the disproportionate profits of those speculating on margin, who have the power to derail restructuring processes and to disrupt the proper functioning of debt markets, with the support of the law in the respective jurisdictions. It is therefore difficult for us to understand the refusal of a small number of developed countries to address this scourge, when it has been speculators themselves who have engaged in such practices, including vulture funds, that generated the bubbles that plunged us and other developing countries into the worst global economic crisis of the past 80 years. That is why El Salvador is proud today to have contributed to a measure that will make the world economy healthier, more fair and more developed.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): We commend the General Assembly for adopting resolution 68/304, which was introduced by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and which provides for the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes. We acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina and

commend his delegation's efforts to steer the resolution to the floor.

Issues related to sovereign debt have been on the radar of the international community for several years now. As early as 2002, the Monterrery Consensus encouraged the consideration of an international debt workout mechanism to restructure unsustainable debt in a timely and efficient manner. The issue has also been under consideration by the International Monetary Fund. However, a systemic solution to this long-standing problem, which continues to bedevil several developing and developed countries, has so far eluded us. The timing of the resolution, coming as it does as we gear up for negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, as well as for a comprehensive review of financing for development, is appropriate.

As a firm believer in multilateralism, India believes that every effort must be made to find cooperative solutions to the common problems we face. We look forward to constructive engagement among all Member States so that we can collectively find a mutually acceptable solution to this issue.

Mr. Neo (Singapore): As a member of the Group of 77 and China, we voted in favour of resolution 68/304. However, at the same time, we are concerned that the United Nations may not be the best forum for such negotiations. There are established international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that we think are better placed to take these discussions forward. The IMF has the mandate and necessary expertise. The IMF is already engaged in serious work on the technical issues needed to address and strengthen sovereign debt restructuring. We should allow it to continue those deliberations in good faith.

We hope that further deliberations will proceed with all due care and consideration for the complex and wide-ranging interests involved, including the need, in any debt restructuring, to take into account the contractual rights of all creditors. We look forward to an amicable and durable solution to this issue.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to make the following statement in connection with the adoption of today's important resolution (resolution 68/304), which calls for the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/304. Although we regret that it was not adopted by consensus, we were pleased to be among its sponsors.

Various resolutions and documents adopted by this international Organization as well as within the framework of specialized international conferences, in particular the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, have led to a set of moral and legal obligations and responsibilities according to which support should be given to developing countries in line with their national development priorities, so as to eliminate all obstacles that hamper their efforts to achieve sustainable development. We therefore appreciate the initiative represented by the resolution just adopted, which complements the long-standing, ongoing efforts and numerous initiatives of the Group of 77 and China to find sustainable and just solutions to the issue of sovereign debt, which has become a major obstacle that prevents developing countries from achieving their development goals.

Syria welcomes the focus of resolution 68/304 on the role of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in improving economic and financial systems and providing a firm and swift response to assist developing countries in overcoming sovereign debt impediments and protecting their economies from the mechanisms that have burdened the economies of developing countries.

The restructuring of sovereign debt is well-established in the international financial system. As a sovereign right of all Member States, it must be protected from manipulation by predator entities.

Our role vis-à-vis the wave of crises — especially those of a global nature — requires serious efforts to assist affected countries, with full respect for their sovereignty and priorities. We must not merely look on as economies collapse, thereby threatening people's welfare. We therefore stress the importance of Member States and international and regional organizations assuming their international legal obligations with a view to immediately preventing any politically

motivated manipulation of a crisis in a developing country.

We must face up to the vulture fund phenomenon, as described by the Ambassador of Cuba. International financial institutions, which have not been reformed since their establishment in the 1950s, still contain the very same mechanisms. It is therefore imperative to reform those enormous international institutions, which are failing to uphold the principle of justice in the distribution of wealth.

In conclusion, we express our solidarity and support to the Government and the people of Argentina in their efforts to relieve themselves of the consequences of the sovereign debt crisis. We thank the delegation of Argentina for putting forward this timely initiative in the proper place and forum: the General Assembly.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join others in welcoming Argentina's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Héctor Marcos Timerman, and thank him for his country's leadership in the adoption of resolution 68/304 at a difficult time.

Colombia welcomes the adoption of the resolution as a correct step forward towards that we hope will become a lasting, predictable and effective solution in dealing with sovereign debt as part of an international financial system, which also requires a stable period based on just rules to promote development. That was expressed clearly and eloquently by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Soliz, whom we also thank for his leadership. It is within the framework of the United Nations, more than in any other forum, that we should be able to find solutions for the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring mechanisms.

It has been nearly 70 years since the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions, and more than 10 years since we have been trying here to develop a new financial architecture. Today we have taken a definitive step forward with the firm support provided for the adoption of today's resolution. The international community must realize that there can be no path to inclusive growth and sustainable development without providing a genuine solution to the sovereign debt problem.

Alleviating the debt situation is critical to freeing up resources that could be channelled towards activities favouring poverty eradication, sustainable economic growth, reducing inequality and achieving the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, especially now as we are discussing the post-2015 sustainable development goals and agenda. That is where those resources should be applied.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts and determination. I am convinced that resolution 68/304, which we have adopted today, will be an indispensable element to be considered as part of next year's third International Conference on Financing for Development.

Mr. De Lara Rangel (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the past, Mexico faced and successfully overcame a complicated process in order to restructure its foreign debt. We therefore understand and sympathize with Argentina, and others, in its current situation.

In a constructive spirit and bearing in mind our recent experience, my country proposed some amendments to resolution 68/304. Unfortunately, they did not receive favourable consideration. That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution and regrets that, despite the efforts made, it was not possible to reach consensus on an issue that is of interest to each and every State Member of the Organization.

For many years now, the international community has sought to ensure that the framework for the restructuring of sovereign debt would be capable of overcoming the difficulties that may arise in practice and providing guarantees to the parties involved. The past decade has seen significant progress in ensuring that those processes do not jeopardize the economic stability of States. The inclusion of collective action clauses in sovereign debt contracts is an example of such progress.

Improving and streamlining sovereign debt restructuring processes is an ongoing activity that is considered in the relevant international forums, with the participation of our countries. Recently, in particular, there has been significant progress and concrete alternatives proposed to strengthen the contractual frameworks regarding sovereign debt. We would like to point out that in those cases where we have identified areas that could benefit from greater legal certainty and clarity, we have gone before the relevant judicial bodies. For example, we recently had the honour to appear before the United States Supreme Court as a friend of the court in order to express our concerns about, and make recommendations for, creating a

better environment for restructuring sovereign debt in general, and in Argentina in particular.

Mexico agrees that we should continue to strengthen the existing framework and that no debt-restructuring process should impose unsustainable burdens on a country or endanger its development and population. In that regard, we reiterate our support to the Government of Argentina regarding the situation that the restructuring of its sovereign debt has led to and our solidarity with countries dealing with similar processes.

Mr. Kohona (Sri Lanka): I would like to associate my delegation with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to thank Argentina for taking this commendable initiative.

Sri Lanka would like to express its full support for the adoption today of resolution 68/304. We agree with its objective of increasing the efficiency, stability and predictability of the international financial system without adversely affecting economic growth. Maintaining economic growth is one of our prime goals. We expect this initiative to contribute to the fulfilment of the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. It is very clear that, if the current unregulated legal processes continue, finishing that unfinished business will remain a distant dream. After all, we have all committed to cooperating in the pursuit of sustainable development.

We hope that many of our developed-country partners will in due course support this initiative. Once we agree on the importance of establishing a legal framework for sovereign debt-restructuring processes, the framework's modalities could be decided through constructive dialogue. A constructive dialogue aimed at achieving an equitable goal will help both sides. We note the extensive arrangements that are in place to deal with debt in domestic legal systems; there is no reason not to have one in the international arena. Predictability and certainty in dealing with overhanging debt can only benefit the international community and individual countries, and make them less vulnerable to salivating vultures, whether developed or developing.

We believe that the United Nations is the most appropriate and representative forum for discussing the issue of sovereign debt. There are any number of reports that have examined this issue in the past. A regulatory legal framework for sovereign debt-restructuring processes is essential. Addressing the sovereign debt problems of developing countries is an important part of international cooperation. We hope that the Secretary-General, who has made sustainable development goals a priority, will focus on this critical aspect, perhaps by getting a group of advisers to look at it as an urgent matter.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): I would like to align my statement with that delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China on today's adoption of resolution 68/304, and I thank Ambassador Llorentty Solíz, Chair of the G-77 and China, for introducing it. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the tactful diplomacy displayed by Argentina in addressing this issue, as well as its continuing engagement with the various delegations on this resolution. I applaud Mr. Timerman for his leadership of a fine group of diplomats.

We took a position in favour of this resolution because it addresses an issue of paramount significance for the global economy and one that affects the ability of the developing world to achieve sustainable development. As efforts are under way to design a blueprint for sustainable development in the coming year, those issues of sustainability and development must be addressed in order to ensure the realization of the post-2015 development agenda. The international community must examine options for effective, equitable, durable, independent and development-oriented debt restructuring, and for a resolution on international debt restructuring to meet the goals of eradicating poverty, achieving sustainable development and reducing inequalities.

Mr. Grant (Canada): Canada recognizes the challenges faced by countries suffering through fiscal difficulties, as well as the importance of examining mechanisms aimed at addressing sovereign debt restructuring. However, bringing this issue into the United Nations, particularly in an artificially short time frame, with procedural irregularities, further politicizes a technical issue. Canada's position against today's resolution 68/304 reflects our strong view that the General Assembly is not the appropriate venue for discussions about sovereign debt restructuring. Canada believes instead that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where most Member States are well represented, and the Group of 20 are better venues for such discussions. We are also concerned about the possibility that finite United Nations resources may be

used for such initiatives, which would be a duplication of the work of other, better-suited institutions. The question of how to handle sovereign debt restructuring is highly technical in nature, and Canada supports continuing the existing discussions within the IMF and other bodies that aim to address issues of sovereign debt.

Mrs. Eckey (Norway): Norway supports parts of the technical aspects of today's resolution 68/304 and recognizes the need for an independent, multilateral approach to resolving the debt crises of developing countries. Since 2012 we have supported the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in developing a step-by-step approach to the process of creating a mechanism for working out debt. Regrettably, the process that led up to today's resolution has not been fruitful or consensus-driven, which is unfortunate. The time set aside for the consideration of substance, discussion and negotiation was inadequate and unrealistic. The lack of consensus gives the resolution limited operational value.

We would have preferred to have a discussion in connection with the regular debt resolution of the Second Committee. Although there are other key players in the international arena, notably the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club, we do welcome the engagement of the General Assembly in these matters. However, a rushed, divisive and premature proposal is counterproductive. Norway therefore abstained from taking a position on this resolution.

Mr. Versegi (Australia): I am speaking in explanation of our position on today's resolution 68/304 and request that it be recorded as such.

Australia was against the adoption of the resolution, but not because we think the issues it covers are unimportant. We agree on the importance of sovereign debt and on the need for a restructuring framework that does not undermine the smooth running of the global system and economic well-being of national Governments, businesses and individuals in affected countries.

That is why Australia is an active participant and contributor to the existing forums, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, the Multilateral Debt Relief initiative, the Paris Club, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). We recognize that progress towards consensus on sovereign debt issues has been slower than we and others would have liked, and we remain open to discussing ways to make existing forums work better. However, as others have said, the IMF's work on strengthening the contractual framework for sovereign-debt restructuring is well advanced, and it would be appropriate to consider how the international community should respond to sovereign-debt restructuring issues once that work is completed.

We should note, however, that we do not believe the United Nations is an appropriate forum in which to take this issue forward, or that a United Nations convention, or new multilateral legal framework, under legal United Nations auspices will be either appropriate or effective. We look forward to continuing to work with colleagues on these very critical issues through existing forums, with a view to reaching consensus.

Mr. Koncke (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome the presence in the Hall today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, Mr. Héctor Timerman. I also wish to commend the work done by the Group of 77 and China under the chairmanship of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in the person of its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Solíz. And I would like to commend the work of the Permanent Mission of Argentina under the leadership of Ambassador María Cristina Perceval, towards the adoption this afternoon of resolution 68/304, which Uruguay fully supports.

The problems of debt restructuring currently being faced by Argentina are not exclusive to that country; they reflect the reality of a great number of countries that have been affected by similar circumstances, or could find themselves in that situation in the near future. Moreover, it affects the international community as a whole, both developed and developing countries. We should not lose sight of the fact that external debt is one of the main obstacles to development, economic growth and the eradication of poverty. It is also clear that debt limits the capacity to create the conditions that are required for the exercise of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights.

As far as breadth is concerned, we appreciate the fact that today in the General Assembly we have considered a resolution of this scope. We feel that this is the appropriate forum to deal with economic and financial matters, given the current challenges that exist. The General Assembly is the most democratic organ of this institution where the entire membership is represented on an equal footing.

Uruguay has expressed its repudiation of financial speculation as represented by vulture funds. We believe that it is essential that countries be able to count on a restructuring of sovereign debt under just conditions without that affecting their development, and at the end of the day the well-being of its people. These kinds of unjust situations fly in the face of creating the conditions for the development that we have referred to, as well as growth and the eradication of poverty, among other areas that we deal with in the United Nations. A human rights perspective is also absent, one that should be taken into considered when dealing with the well-being of peoples. We cannot allow restructuring of debt to prevent us in any way from achieving the Millennium Development Goals, or attaining the future sustainable development goals.

The international community must look into ways by which economic interests of this kind could threaten the well-being of millions of people. My delegation sees this resolution in that spirit.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile voted in fa vour of resolution 68/304 because it refers to a pending issue in the area of financing for development. The international community, in the context of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, stressed the need to work on and solve the systemic problems in the international financial architecture. We feel that the adoption of this resolution is a step in the right direction — part of the work of the upcoming third Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July 2015 — in the framework of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. It is also a demonstration of solidarity towards developing countries that have faced a difficult situation in restructuring their sovereign debt because of the lack of a multilateral framework to govern such processes.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to support the statement made by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We welcome the adoption of resolution 68/304, entitled "Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes". We would also like to cordially welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Mr. Héctor Timerman.

Historically, the international financial institutions have promoted initiatives to alleviate debt that have been accompanied by favourable conditions for States that sign up to them. Although such initiatives may be able to solve structural economic problems, in the end they increase the structural social debt, in turn leading to serious violations of people's human rights. The persistent problem of external debt and the servicing of that debt by low- and middle-income developing countries over the years has been an important factor in preventing economic and social growth in a large number of countries. In addition, today some developed countries are also suffering from this, particularly the most vulnerable countries of the European Union who currently are facing very many social problems because of external debt.

A very sensitive and complicated issue for countries in debt are the so-called vulture funds — named for an animal whose main trait entails going in for the kill just as its prey is dying. Such funds, formally referred to as distressed investment funds, buy up the debt of countries and companies about to go bankrupt, usually at 20 to 30 per cent of their value, and then they argue in courts for 100 per cent reimbursement. According to inforamtion from the International Monetary Fund, as many as eight such funds are pursuing heavily indebted countries, such as the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Uganda and, more recently, Argentina. Clearly, vulture funds are behaving in line with the selfish logic of capitalism, which only seeks to easily enrich the few to the detriment of the most vulnerable.

The challenge faced by the international community is to find effective solutions at the United Nations, not from the international financial institutions given the disaster that the latter have brought about at the international level with regard to resolving the debt issue. For developing countries it is of vital importance that we maintain a reference to transparency in the processes dealing with external debt. That is a criticism of the non-functioning of the international financing institutions. As rightly pointed out by the Group of 77 and China in the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, adopted on 15 June, it is alarming to see the increasing number of developing countries that are being affected by the global economic crisis and that are becoming even more vulnerable to problems related to external debt. Therefore, the external debt problem of developing countries is an important component of

international cooperation and the global alliance for development.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been promoting bilateral financial assistance initiatives by buying up debt from other countries of the region, while condemning the speculative practices of so-called vulture funds. Once again, our country is an example in terms of the new strategies being adopted by developing countries to promote interregional financing among ourselves and to reduce our dependence on and vulnerability vis-à-vis international capital markets. That also means better usage of the financing cycles related to the export prices of primary resources and their rational usage in financing regional development strategies aimed at facilitating investment in infrastructure, growth and integration.

In that connection, the Venezuelan position is guided by its homeland plan for the period 2013-2019, which is aimed at contributing to the development of new international geopolitics in which a multicentric, polycentric world takes shape that will lead to the achievement of global harmony and guarantee peace in the world. That is seen in particular in the development of a new international financial architecture that is fair and can really solve the external debt problem of developing countries.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been supporting Argentina's position in all international forums with regard to the restructuring of the country's sovereign debt in the face of vulture funds. In that connection, we have stressed the fact that one cannot require States to pay an immoral debt under unacceptable conditions. That is why the region must get behind such initiatives as the Bank of the South in order to independently counter the attacks of speculative financial capital.

In conclusion, the debt problem is intimately linked to the need to create a new international financial architecture that is fairer and more democratic by strengthening the United Nations system in that area, the commitment of developing countries and the new financial systems that are being created at the regional level. Bilateral funds such as Venezuela's with Iran, China and Russia seek new innovative alternatives to solve the problem of developing countries' debt, based on States' real needs and without affecting their internal policies or their economic or political systems.

In that regard, we would stress that the Millennium Development Goals could be jeopardized given the reality that the large majority of indebted countries must divert their scarce resources to paying their debt rather that investing them for the benefit of their peoples.

As Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro Moros has said, we support any initiative aimed at finding appropriate, effective, wide-ranging and durable solutions to the problem of debt on the basis of the resolution adopted today.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by our colleague Mr. Sacha Llorentty Solíz, Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Chair of the Group of 77 and China (G-77).

While Algeria would have preferred to adopt resolution 68/304 by consensus, we nonetheless welcome the results of today's vote. By adopting the resolution, the General Assembly has sent a clear message to the banking and financial sectors that practices and measures that could hinder the development of any country are of serious concern to us at the United Nations.

Today's resolution is timely, judicious and legitimate. It not only seeks to establish an appropriate framework whose purpose is to effectively and adequately regulate the process of sovereign debt restructuring, but it also places States and peoples at the heart of the system, thereby preventing financial institutions devoid of any form of scruples from hijacking the development process of a nation or its sovereignty. In that vein, I must recall the words of President Evo Morales Ayma of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, who has spoken about the inhuman and untamed nature of capitalism. But we also accept our system of the global economy.

Algeria, which faced a terrible financial crisis in the 1990s and had to confront the terrible process of debt restructuring, has consistently advocated a profound reform of the international financial system so as to reflect the development aspirations of all people — which means that it is not just about making profits. We can accept reasonable profits, of course, but the goal is also to effectively promote poverty eradication, job creation, production and strong inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

At this juncture I wish to congratulate to congratulate Minister Timerman and our colleague,

Mrs. María Perceval. They did a tremendous job. We extend our congratulations for their initiative and for the huge international success they have achieved. We thank them because they sounded a wake-up call for everyone, including those who did not agree with the G-77 text. This goes beyond the Argentine debt: freedom and democracy are at stake. National cohesion and international relations should be governed in a transparent, democratic and open way that benefits all.

We cannot contemplate financial institutions and the latest crisis always being on our minds. We cannot countenance having invisible groups behind the scenes deciding on the stability and fate of peoples, countries and citizens without their knowledge. This is not a technical issue; it is a hard-wired political one. Those people, groups and institutions are not — and they cannot act as if they were — our elected leaders, working against our basic interests and the stability of our countries.

For all those reasons, Algeria is a strong supporter of the G-77 resolution.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Agenda item 67 (*continued*)

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Draft decision (A/68/L.58)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly decided to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 67 directly in plenary meeting and adopted resolution 68/237 at its 72nd plenary meeting, on 23 December 2013, and adopted decision 68/556 at its 99th plenary meeting, on 30 June 2014.

The General Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/68/L.58, entitled "Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/68/L.58?

Draft decision A/68/L.58 was adopted (decision 68/558).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 67 and of agenda item 67 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 75 (*continued*)

Report of the International Criminal Court

Draft resolution (A/68/L.59)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 75 at its 41st and 42nd plenary meetings, on 31 October 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.59.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 75, draft resolution A/68/L.59, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court". In addition to the six countries listed in document A/68/L.59, which contains the text of the draft resolution, 59 countries have indicated their wish to be included as sponsors of the draft resolution. That brings the total number of sponsors to 66. It is my understanding that the Secretariat will read out the names of those countries.

On 31 October 2013, the President of the International Criminal Court, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, presented the ninth annual report (A/68/4) of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the Assembly (see A/68/PV.41). We had a very constructive and in-depth debate then, and I would like to highlight a few elements of it.

First, in order to ensure the Court's success, universal adherence to the Rome Statute of the ICC remains essential. With 122 States having ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute, almost two thirds of States Members of the United Nations have shown their commitment to its universality. It is our sincere hope that others will join in the near future.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the fact that the situation with respect to outstanding arrest warrants remains deeply troubling. The Court remains reliant on State cooperation in the enforcement of its orders and decisions. If States do not provide the cooperation necessary for the Court's functioning in accordance with their legal obligations, it will not be able to fulfil its mandate, and impunity will continue to flourish.

The cooperation of States, international organizations and civil society is essential to the Court's functioning. That cooperation is crucial not only in relation to the arrest and surrender of accused persons, but also in relation to the provision of evidence, the protection and relocation of victims and witnesses and the enforcement of sentences. We are therefore pleased that the United Nations has continued over the past year to assist the Court in its endeavours through the implementation of the relationship agreement. We also welcome the assistance provided thus far by States parties and States not parties and call on all States to continue to support the Court's efforts in that respect.

Thirdly, I would like to recall that the hallmark of the Court is its independent judicial nature. At the same time, that judicial institution operates within the political world, and it needs States to not just cooperate with it but also respect, protect and enhance its judicial independence.

Fourthly, my Government welcomes the recent visit of the Security Council to The Hague to meet with the members of the International Criminal Court, among others. Practical follow-up to that visit to further enhance the relationship is called for.

Fifthly and finally, the ICC's annual report and the debate in the General Assembly also underlined the role of the Court in our common efforts to build an international community characterized not only by the rule of law and respect for human rights, but also by peace and security. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved if the perpetrators of the most serious crimes are not brought to justice. Peace and justice are complementary requirements. Peace and justice also serve as essential conditions that further the development of nations recovering from conflict. Research has demonstrated that those nations that have come to terms with the wrongdoings of the past are better equipped to make progress and advance than those that remain unable to deal with crimes from the past.

My country, the Netherlands, takes pride in being the host State to the International Criminal Court and many other leading international legal institutions. The Kingdom of the Netherlands reiterates its commitment to be the United Nations partner in the pursuit of peace, justice and development, which are three fundamental pillars that, as I mentioned before, are inseparable and cannot be attained in isolation. We stand ready to continue to work with the Assembly in achieving our common objectives in those areas.

Allow me to now turn to the draft resolution itself (A/68/L.59), which serves three main objectives.

First, it provides political support for the International Criminal Court as an organization and for its mandate, its aims and the work it carries out.

Secondly, it underlines the importance of the relationship between the Court and the United Nations on the basis of the relationship agreement, as both the United Nations and the ICC have an equally central role in enhancing the system of international criminal justice.

Thirdly and lastly, the draft resolution serves to remind States and international and regional organizations of the need to cooperate with the International Criminal Court in carrying out its tasks.

Please allow me to thank all delegations that participated in the negotiations for their constructive cooperation and the flexibility shown during the negotiations on this draft resolution.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus and that it will lead to even greater support for the Court in the fight against impunity, and its attempts to hold the perpetrators of serious crimes accountable for their actions.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.59 entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Mahmassani (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/68/L.59, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia,

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Uruguay.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.59?

Draft resolution A/68/L.59 was adopted (resolution 68/305).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Rahamtalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Sudan reiterates its clear and firm position on rejecting the so-called International Criminal Court (ICC), as it continues to serve as a forum for politicizing international justice and targeting African leaders. Since its establishment, the Court has maintained its antagonistic position vis-à-vis the African States.

The Sudan is not party to the Rome Statute. Hence, we are not bound by its decisions in accordance with the Vienna Treaty on the Law of Treaties. We have a national justice system that is qualified and capable of administering justice. We can achieve that without any external support. The strenuous efforts to make the General Assembly an assembly of States parties to the International Criminal Court violates the Charter of the United Nations and runs counter to the established principles of international law. The Court is an independent body with no institutional link with the United Nations. No obligation beyond the context of States parties should be imposed on non-State parties. The Sudan therefore did not vote in favour of resolution 68/305. It does not support it. We request that our position be reflected in the record of the meeting.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of the resolution.

I now give the floor to those representatives that have requested the floor to make statements following the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Liechtenstein.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 68/305 by consensus but also regret that, despite the efforts of the facilitator from the Netherlands and of States parties, virtually no progress has been achieved compared to last year's text (see resolution 67/295) in spite of important substantive developments in the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC). We hope that we will be able to embark on a better process in the future and to agree on a text of improved quality and greater relevance.

The International Criminal Court has established itself as the centrepiece of the international fight against impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, in which the United Nations is a key partner. The annual resolution is the only text that deals exclusively with the relationship between the two institutions. It is therefore an important vehicle to adequately reflect and promote that relationship.

The resolution can and should be an important tool to assist the Court in fulfilling its mandate to fight impunity. Unfortunately, we must state that this year's text only partly fulfils that expectation. The States parties to the Rome Statute have made numerous suggestions on how the resolution could be improved but very few of those are reflected in the text just adopted.

We regret in particular that the text does not take better account of the ongoing ratification process of the Kampala amendments on war crimes and on the crime of aggression. The prohibition of the illegal use of force is at the core of the Charter of the United Nations. The criminalization of the crime of aggression before the ICC will bring the two institutions even closer together. It would therefore be appropriate for the General Assembly to call on States to ratify those amendments, since a significant number of States have already done so and as they entail a notable contribution to the purposes and objectives of the Organization.

The Security Council is given a special role under the Rome Statute, as it can refer situations of States not party to the Statute to the Court in order to hold perpetrators to account. The Security Council must utilize its referral power in a consistent manner, whenever necessary. Having made use of that role twice in the past, the Council also needs to follow up on its own referrals in order to allow for judicial proceedings to take place in The Hague. A better institutional framework to discuss issues of cooperation between the Council and the Court is needed, as too many of

the Court's letters and requests by States have gone unanswered and too many technical issues have not been addressed. The recent visit of the Security Council to the headquarters of the ICC is an important step that should be followed up by practical measures.

We also wish to again point out that the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court provides for the Court to be refunded by the United Nations for expenses incurred in connection with Security Council referrals. That issue is also not adequately reflected in the text, even though a significant number of delegations felt that it should be. The ICC faces serious capacity constraints and would not be able to discharge crucial tasks, such as investigations of crimes in other situations following a Security Council referral, without being given additional resources. The United Nations membership cannot continue to turn a blind eye to that fact.

We therefore look forward to discussing with like-minded delegations how we can bring the text closer to its important purpose, reflecting the political challenges that the Court faces in its interaction with the United Nations and, instead of focusing on technical matters, addressing pressing political concerns.

Ms. Millicay (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank the representative of the Netherlands as the facilitator of resolution 68/305.

Argentina not only supported the adoption of the resolution but also co-sponsored it. It did so due to its firm support for the International Criminal Court (ICC). My country values the fact that the resolution was adopted by consensus because the relationship between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations is undeniable. The Organization has supported the objective of fighting impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern and, in the light of that and of the Rome Statute, the Security Council has already made two referrals to the ICC.

However, beyond valuing such consensus, we believe that consensus is not an end in itself but should contain the appropriate content that adequately reflects the development of the Court and of its relationship with the United Nations, as well as the new challenges. In that light, I would like to highlight some aspects of the resolution that have given us cause for concern.

Paragraph 14 limits itself to mentioning the fact that, to date, the financial cost of referrals made by the Security Council to the Court has been borne by the States parties. However, it is also a fact that the Rome Statute provides that the costs of the referrals must be borne by the United Nations. That provision is also reflected in the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, adopted by the General Assembly by consensus (see resolution 58/318).

That said, what we have before us today is the fact that the regrettable practice of the Security Council regarding the financing of referrals is also reflected in the General Assembly despite a great majority of States supporting full compliance with article 115, paragraph (b), of the Rome Statute and with article 13 of the Relationship Agreement and the fact that it is within the competence of the General Assembly. It is not acceptable that the General Assembly be put in the position of not being able to take a decision on the matter, for which it is fully competent under the Charter. My country believes that the issue must be adequately addressed. Not doing so may undermine the sustainability of the Court's investigations and the credibility of the Organization.

Also, with regard to the Security Council, the Organization must responsibly follow up its referrals to the Court. The Council has made very little progress to date. We believe that the General Assembly should be in a position to urge the Council to have a more organic institutionalized relationship and to cooperate more flexibly with the Court. Unfortunately, on this occasion we have not achieved this either.

Another aspect regarding which no progress is reflected in the resolution, even though there has in fact been progress among States parties, is that of the ratification of the amendments to the Rome Statute adopted in Kampala in 2010, in particular the ratification of the amendment on the crime of aggression. For reasons we fail to understand, the General Assembly does not seem to be able to reflect in its pronouncements the progress made towards the entry into force of the amendment on aggression. This attitude is deeply regrettable, as that amendment represents a clear contribution by the Rome Statute to international peace and security.

The notable contribution made by the ICC to the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern is also a contribution to the objectives of the Organization. We hope that the General Assembly, which throughout its history has also made remarkable contributions to the evolution of

the protection of human rights and accountability for heinous crimes, will in future be able to reflect in an appropriate manner the current challenges facing the ICC and its relationship with the United Nations.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to endorse the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein on behalf of a group of States parties. We should like to make some additional comments in our national capacity.

The International Criminal Court is undoubtedly one of the most important success stories of multilateralism. It was born of the will of the international community to put an end to impunity for the most serious crimes against humanity and to bring justice to victims. Its essence and its main strength lie in its erga omnes jurisdiction, a fundamental principle of justice, because history has shown that there can be no lasting peace without justice.

As a result of this global aspiration, the world demands that there can be no State where impunity prevails. That is why Costa Rica reiterates the need to continue promoting the ratification of the Rome Statute until such time as it becomes universal.

In the meantime, the Statute provides that the United Nations, through the Security Council, should refer to the International Criminal Court those cases where heinous crimes have been committed in States non-parties. That power conferred on the Security Council should be exercised with the utmost responsibility and objectivity. Costa Rica has repeatedly put forward a proposal to establish a uniform, predictable and transparent protocol for the referral of cases to the Court. There is no justification for situations such as that of Syria, where reports of United Nations experts have repeatedly found evidence of war crimes, not to have been referred to the Court.

In this respect, Costa Rica welcomes the fact that France has revised the proposal of the Small Five Group, of which Costa Rica was a part, which seeks to encourage members of the Security Council to subscribe to a code of conduct under which they would undertake not to resort to the veto in cases where war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity have been committed.

My delegation would also urge that in future referrals to the Court, the Security Council not include jurisdictional exceptions that violate the principle of equality before the law and thereby risk its credibility and that of the Court. Such resolutions must also establish the obligation for all Member States to cooperate with the Court. The terms of the resolution on Syria, submitted by France and, unfortunately, vetoed, created unacceptable exceptions.

Another crucial issue is the financing of referrals to the ICC by the United Nations. Given that the Charter places responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on the shoulders of the Security Council, in effecting such referrals the Court is helping that organ to discharge its mandate. In cases relating to cooperation, article 13 of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court must be applied, as it provides for the provision of economic support by the United Nations.

The Agreement makes clear that contributions will be made by a decision of the General Assembly. For that reason, my delegation considers it inappropriate that resolutions of the Security Council incorporate language that has the aim of excluding such an economic contribution. That goes beyond the powers of the Council and contravenes the Agreement of September 2004.

The issues that I have just mentioned, as well as other key matters such as advance notification by United Nations officials who are to have essential contact with fugitives from the Criminal Court, as well as the status of the ratifications of the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression, among other things, are issues covered in the report presented by the President of the Court. As such, and given their current relevance, mentioning them in the current resolution was not only appropriate but also particularly relevant.

However, it was not possible to include them fully in the text because of arguments to the effect that these matters are not the exclusive remit of the Assembly of States Parties. My delegation does not agree. International criminal justice must be in the interest of all States Members of the United Nations, and the preamble to the cooperation Agreement between the Court and the United Nations makes express reference to the fact that the Rome Statute reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter, mentioning the important role assigned to the Court in the context of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

The texts quoted show the recognition given by the Organization to the Court with regard to its key role in maintaining international peace and security. We must now implement this cooperation Agreement in such a manner that the support of the United Nations is strengthened.

Given its importance, the workload of the Court is the greatest in its history: eight active investigations, each with multiple cases, and eight preliminary investigations. If the United Nations does not provide financial support for Court referrals, we will have an institution that will be obliged to decide whether or not it begins an investigation based on its budget, not on justice.

It is for these reasons that Costa Rica deeply regrets that today we are adopting once again a draft resolution that does not meet the commitments emanating from the cooperation Agreement between the United Nations and the Court, and, worse still, does not meet the needs of international criminal justice.

Finally, I would like to share with the Assembly a few lines of the joint communiqué issued on 17 July during the celebration of International Criminal Justice Day by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela:

> "Although we know that international criminal justice faces new challenges, we are confident that we will overcome them, and that, with the support and the commitment of all States Members of the United Nations, civil society and the relevant institutions, we will continue to move towards a world where accountability prevails".

Mr. Joyini (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statement read on behalf of the States parties to the Rome Statute by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein. My delegation would like to join others in thanking the Netherlands for a job well done in facilitating negotiations on resolution 68/305. My delegation is pleased to join in the consensus on the resolution.

South Africa is a firm supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC). As such, South Africa does not take for granted the ICC's contribution to international criminal justice and the fight against impunity.

As a State party to the Rome Statute, we are keenly aware of the budgetary implications resulting from ICC investigations and prosecutions. We wish to point out in this regard that the costs of the investigation and prosecution of situations referred to the ICC by the Security Council should be borne by the United Nations. After all, these situations are referred to the ICC on behalf of the United Nations as a whole, and it is inequitable that only States parties should bear the costs. More to the point, my delegation is concerned that the practice of the Security Council of excluding the possibility of United Nations financing for situations referred to the ICC by the Council amounts to usurping the functions of the General Assembly under Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations.

For these reasons, while we joined the consensus on resolution 68/305, we wish to express our disappointment that it does not include a paragraph on financing.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): The delegation of Kenya acknowledges the adoption by consensus of resolution 68/305, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court". We express our gratitude to the facilitator, the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for ably steering the lengthy negotiations. As a responsible member of the family of nations, Kenya joins in the consensus and feels it pertinent to make the following statement in our national capacity.

At the outset, we note that the resolution can assist the Court in fulfilling its mandate, which is to fight impunity. However, informed by current developments in the Kenyan cases before the Court, and further informed by the recent filings by the Office of the Prosecutor, Kenya is constrained to state that we remain deeply concerned by the current interpretation and implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

That the Kenyan cases are currently facing serious challenges is a matter of public knowledge. We are faced with a situation in which, in one case, the Office of the Prosecutor has on more than one occasion publicly stated that the evidence available is insufficient to prove the defendant's alleged criminal responsibility beyond a reasonable doubt. In the other case, a witness has publicly affirmed that he presented false evidence and, by his own account, committed perjury with the knowledge or connivance of named officials of the Court.

This unfortunate state of affairs goes against all time-tested tenets of legal and judicial norms practiced in line with known international standards of both civil law and common law. It would seem that there is an inability on the part of the Office of the Prosecutor and the Court to reach the only logical conclusion in light of the prevailing circumstances. We believe that these challenges are insurmountable even if the Office of the Prosecutor and the Court are given an indefinite length of time. The gaps are simply too wide and too huge to fill to ensure the credibility of the trials in the two Kenyan cases.

While the ICC endeavours to carry out its mandate and continues to receive the earnest cooperation of State parties, it may appear that in the present state of interpretation and implementation, the ideals of the Rome Statute — namely, punishment of serious crimes, fighting impunity, national healing and reconciliation and reparations for victims — may be achievable. However, our delegation believes that the current implementation and interpretation of the Rome Statute are counterproductive and antagonistic to these very ideals.

Our continued silence and acceptance will only undermine the legitimacy of the Court and its core mandate, the fight against impunity. They also do a great disservice to the victims in whose name the proceedings continue to be perpetuated, not to mention that they also violate the rights of the accused protected in the Rome Statute.

We believe that the Rome Statute is undergoing a test of its veracity, usefulness and impartiality. We therefore need the international community to take prompt and decisive action to ensure that the cases do not drag on ad infinitum. The time has come to make a decision on the future of the Kenyan cases. From where we stand, it is time for the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor to do the right thing by dropping the cases and charges. The present challenge is not only about the future management of international justice, or of cases of impunity and violence in the world; it is also about the way in which nation States relate to one another in the context of the international justice system. This is the only step that can keep the integrity of the Court intact.

The issues of resources and capacity constraints have been alluded to by many speakers before me. It is in this context that our delegation asks that both human capital and financial resources be judiciously utilized and best directed to other more deserving situations and uses.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate my earlier remark, which was that the resolution adopted today, dealing with the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, presents a unique opportunity for State parties and non-parties alike to support the Court in the fulfilment of its mandate. Therefore, our plea is that the Rome Statute be interpreted and implemented in the manner and the style that the framers of the same Statute intended.

Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary): My country welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/305, on the report of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Hungary co-sponsored the resolution, deeming it important that the United Nations membership regularly examine its relationship with the International Criminal Court in a forward-looking manner. Hungary is one of the countries that envisage even stronger resolutions that flesh out the relationship between the Court, the United Nations and its membership in a more detailed manner. Hungary therefore aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein on behalf of a group of countries championing more frequent and principled interaction between the United Nations and the Court.

Let me touch upon only one element, already mentioned in that statement, namely, the issue of referrals. Hungary believes that future resolutions should take a broader perspective on the issue of referrals, acknowledging the mutually reinforcing relationship between the tasks of the ICC and the Security Council. Hungary continues to stress that there can be no lasting peace without justice. A lack of accountability not only kills in the present, but becomes a breeding ground for future atrocities. Moreover, where civilians are targeted, the Security Council should take all measures at its disposal to protect the civilian population.

In line with the Council's presidential statement S/PRST/2013/2 on the protection of civilians and the commitments towards strengthening accountability, the Security Council must utilize its referral power in a consistent manner wherever and whenever it is necessary. It is on the basis of these principles that Hungary joined the initiative of Switzerland and signed a letter (A/67/694, annex), along with 56 other Member

States, requesting the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC.

The international community must also assist the Government of Iraq in fighting terrorism and in investigating the brutal acts being committed in that country, including those threatening the very existence of Christian and other religious minorities living in northern Iraq.

Hungary welcomes the recent resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council requesting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to dispatch a mission to Iraq to investigate alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated terrorist groups, with a view to ensuring full accountability. In addition to supporting the Iraqi Government and the OHCHR mission, all other options should be explored by the international community. One such possibility that has been carefully examined by Hungary is whether to initiate a request for a referral by the Security Council of the situation to the International Criminal Court, following due consultation with the Iraqi Government.

In general, it is our fervent hope that future resolutions will take an approach whereby the role of making referrals related to the protection of civilians and the prevention of conflict is further elaborated and strengthened.

Mr. Luna (Brazil): Brazil joined in the consensus adoption of resolution 68/305, on the report of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We sponsored annual resolutions on the ICC report until the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, demonstrating our unwavering support for the idea that the Court has a pivotal role to play in the fight against impunity. Precisely for that reason, we consider that the best means to support the ICC is to voice our deep and growing concern by emphasizing an issue of a structural nature that goes to the core of the relationship between the Court and the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly.

Despite the clear guidance provided in article 115 (b) of the Rome Statute and article 13.2 of the Relationship Agreement between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations, in the sense that the United Nations must bear the cost of investigations and prosecutions related to referrals by the Security Council, the Assembly has limited itself to acknowledging the fact that those expenses have been borne exclusively by States parties to the Rome Statute.

Considering that the annual resolution is the only text dedicated exclusively to the relationship between the ICC and the United Nations, it is regrettable that it does not call upon Member States to actually address that issue. Furthermore, the incipient practice of the Security Council to try to block the possibility of the United Nations bearing the costs arising from referrals to the ICC usurps the General Assembly's exclusive responsibility to consider and approve the budget of the Organization, as set out in Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations. At a time when not only does the Court face an unprecedented workload, but Security Council members also frequently entertain ideas of proposing referrals to the ICC, we must objectively reflect on the sustainability of a system in which the costs of the implementation of this association are met solely by States parties to the Rome Statute.

Brazil firmly believes that the relationship of the United Nations with the ICC, including by means of referrals made by the Security Council, must be accompanied by the fulfilment of the responsibility of the United Nations in providing financial support for the work of the Court. That issue is one of many indications that the distance between the problems faced by the Court and this yearly negotiated text is not decreasing. We hope to redouble our efforts during the upcoming session of the General Assembly in order to approve a text truly deserving of the ICC.

Mr. Adi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Having listened to the statements made in this debate, I am compelled to take the floor.

The representatives of Costa Rica and Hungary tried to include the situation in my country, Syria, in the negotiations on today's item. That imposition is part of an attempt to reshuffle the roles played by certain countries. This would seem to be a tradition. We are familiar with seeing the redistribution of roles when the item of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is brought into the discussion. The representatives of Hungary and Costa Rica forgot or omitted to mention that their countries and other States Members of the United Nations that claim to uphold justice recently turned a blind eye to documented war crimes and crimes against humanity. They have kept silent before the crimes that have been witnessed in the Arab region. That attitude has also been adopted by those who use hypocrisy to practice diplomacy.

We would have loved to see the debate focused where it should have been focused — on countries that sponsor terrorism, supply material and financial support, and instil barbaric ideas in the minds of terrorists. We would have loved for those two representatives to have called for those responsible for those brutal actions to be referred to the International Criminal Court. The politicization and double standards practiced by certain delegations have bled the lofty principle of justice of its meaning and undermined their credibility.

I wish to reaffirm that the Syrian Government is making every effort to shoulder its responsibility for upholding justice. The Syrian people and authorities are the only parties with the right to choose the judicial arrangements they deem necessary to punish those involved in the events in my country. We reaffirm that no State can impose its opinions on the Syrian people. Those who wish to help the Syrian people should assist the Syrian-led process on the basis of the principle of national ownership and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Costa Rican representative referred to the challenges faced by the ICC. It is true that the ICC is facing challenges, foremost among which are the double standards, politicization and hypocrisy that compose the approach of certain countries in dealing with international events. The representative of Hungary addressed terrorist crime in Iraq as if the killing of Syrians by terrorists were legal. He concentrated on the protection of certain religious minorities and the protection of minorities in general, omitting to state the need to protect all Syrians, all Iraqis and all human beings from indiscriminate terrorist actions sponsored by certain countries, such as his own, with its double standards.

We do not identify human beings according to their religions or affiliation with minority groups. Every citizen in Syria is a Syrian citizen. Every Iraqi in Iraq is an Iraqi citizen. Every human being is a human being before any other consideration. We call upon the two delegations to respect the Syrian people and take positions that reflect such respect.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 75.

Agenda items 125 (*continued*) **and 124**

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/68/L.42/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 125, jointly with agenda items 14 and 118, at its 54th plenary meeting, on 20 November 2013, and adopted resolution 68/268 at its 81st plenary meeting, on 9 April 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1.

Ms. Rios Requena (Plurinational State of Bolivia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Enhancement of the administration and financial functioning of the United Nations".

In recent years, many Permanent Missions of Member and Observer States to the United Nations and their staff have been seriously affected and even humiliated by the arbitrary decisions of several banking institutions in the City of New York to abruptly close their bank accounts and subsequently refuse to continue to provide services to them. As a result, the dignity and normal functioning of the Permanent Missions concerned and the United Nations as a whole have been negatively affected. That unusual situation is far from being in line with the facilities that have to be ensured to Permanent Missions to the United Nations under the host country agreement and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Considering the severity of the situation and the number of Missions affected, the Group of 77 and China deems it necessary to present a draft resolution with the objective of achieving a long-term solution to the problem. In April, a process of informal consultations with the whole United Nations membership was undertaken. It is important to underscore that all concerned parties participated and contributed to the draft resolution in a constructive and cooperative spirit. We recognize the engagement of the host country of the United Nations, which has the regulatory power over the banking system, and trust that that engagement will continue.

The Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to deeply thank Belarus for co-sponsoring the draft resolution under consideration.

After four months of consultations, a revised version of draft resolution A/68/L.42 was agreed informally, and it is now before the General Assembly for consideration. Allow me to highlight that the draft recognizes the problem and notes with concern the difficulties experienced by the affected Permanent Missions and their staff, and therefore requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the issue and its impact on the adequate functioning of those Permanent Missions.

The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the financial relations of the Secretariat with the banking institutions in the City of New York, and to provide Member and Observer States with information on alternative options regarding banking services in the City of New York. Furthermore, the draft resolution requests that the host country take as soon as possible additional measures to assist the Permanent Missions accredited to the United Nations and their staff to obtain appropriate banking services, and also stresses the importance of ensuring confidentiality of personal data and information on persons affected by the closure of accounts, inviting the host country to submit relevant information on the norms and regulations applicable to the banking system.

In conclusion, the draft resolution under consideration by the General Assembly will allow the Organization to gain knowledge of the magnitude of the problem and its consequences and will certainly contribute to taking the necessary measures. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to adopting draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1 by consensus and to following up on the matter during the sixty-ninth session, as a first step towards a much-needed permanent solution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Enhancement of the administration and financial functioning of the United Nations".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/68/L.42/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 68/306).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 124 and 125.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.108

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

108th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/68/951)

Draft resolution (A/68/951, para. 91)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda items 121 and 122 at its 59th plenary meeting on 4 December 2013.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 91 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/307).

The President: I should like to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, who have so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I am sure members of the Assembly join me in extending them our sincere appreciation.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States welcome today's adoption of resolution 68/307, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's plenary meeting and for your engagement with the General Assembly revitalization process. We owe further thanks to the co-Chairs, Mr. František Ružička and Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni, and their teams, who ably led the negotiation process forward, as well as to Mr. Noel Sinclair, Deputy Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly, who was personally involved in the negotiations in a most constructive manner, and to Ms. Alina Padeanu of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We also thank Mr. Ion Botnaru, Director of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, and Mr. Georg Zeiner for their useful involvement. We would also like to highlight the constructive atmosphere throughout the negotiations and thank all the negotiating partners for their engagement in revitalizing the General Assembly.

Resolution 68/307, which we have just adopted, contains some concrete results. Two examples of the achievements of the Ad Hoc Working Group during

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the sixty-eighth session include the earlier election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the reiteration of the interim arrangement adopted in decision 68/505, with the guidelines for future arrangements included in the annex of resolution 68/307. On the other hand, we also wish to recall the need to consider and take steps towards the rationalization of the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with a view to eliminating duplication and overlap and promoting complementarity in the consideration and negotiation of similar and related issues. In that context, it is important to note resolution 68/1.

On 23 June, the Council of the European Union adopted its priorities for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Those priorities recognize that the revitalization of the General Assembly is a key component in strengthening the United Nations as a whole, and it is with that in mind that I wish to signal our readiness to remain constructively engaged in this process.

Mr. Lazarev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus expresses its deep gratitude for the often self-sacrificing efforts of the Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, led by co-Chairs Mr. Ružička and Mr. Sinhaseni, the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/68/951) and the related resolution 68/307, adopted by the Assembly today, are causes for genuine optimism concerning the future of the General Assembly. The negotiation process and its results have not only made a definite contribution to settling vital questions about the functioning of the Assembly, but they have also reminded us of the possibility and necessity of seeking and finding compromises even on major issues, which we believe is very important.

During the Working Group's deliberations, my delegation contributed a number of proposals that in our view are designed to strengthen the principles on which the United Nations operates. We therefore consistently called for the practical implementation of the principle of equality for all official United Nations languages. We believe that the year-round publication of the *Journal of the United Nations* in all the official languages, as the General Assembly's rules of procedure require, is not an empty formality but a visible and tangible result of the strengthening the principles of multilingualism and the rule of law in the Organization. We believe that financial issues will not be an obstacle to implementing the rules of procedure and the provisions of today's resolution.

It is particularly important for us that the attention of Member States be called to the process for appointing the Secretary-General, as set forth in the General Assembly's rules of procedure. We believe that every State, large or small, enjoys the inalienable right to express its opinion on the candidatures for Secretary-General, the individual who represents the entire Organization. The Assembly's rules of procedure provide for that possibility.

Another important area is the harmonization of all the Main Committees of the General Assembly. We welcome the Secretariat's efforts to improve the reports on the work of the Committees. At the same time, we believe that much remains to be done in this area, particularly concerning the timeliness of the work and services relating to the *Journal of the United Nations*.

We are sincerely grateful to the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for their efforts in drafting and strengthening, through the resolution, a predictable mechanism for rotating the Chairs of the Main Committees, amplified by principles that give the mechanism the necessary flexibility. These principles include the recognition of the role of the President of the General Assembly; making the mechanism for appointing rapporteurs to the Main Committees automatic; and bringing order to the procedures for making ad hoc changes to the chairmanship arrangements. We hope that the implementation of those standards will enable the Main Committees to devote all the time at their disposal to considering substantive issues. We are willing to take an active part in drawing up new arrangements for chairmanship rotations, as indicated in paragraph 22 of the resolution.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Brazil, Costa Rica, Estonia, Switzerland and my own country, Liechtenstein.

We welcome the consensus adoption today of resolution 68/307 and wish to offer a few comments on the issue of the appointment of the next Secretary-General, as addressed in the text. We are pleased that paragraph 27 reaffirms the role of the President of the General Assembly in actively supporting the process of

appointing the Secretary-General. Paragraph 19 of the annex to resolution 60/286 already stipulates that the President of the General Assembly should consult with Member States in order to identify potential candidates. This has not happened yet, as stated in the commentary to the updated inventory chart on the revitalization (see A/68/951). We hope that future Presidents will fulfil this mandate and play an active role in the process leading to the appointment of the next Secretary-General.

Our delegations had hoped to start a debate within the General Assembly about the criteria for candidates for the position of Secretary-General, so as to ensure the election of the best possible candidate. The aforementioned resolution 60/286 touches on this issue, highlighting how important it is that the Secretary-General possess extensive leadership skills. We had suggested language requesting that the Ad Hoc Working Group consider such criteria and report on them. We regret that the text just adopted does not address this issue and hope that such a discussion, which should also include input from civil society, will be possible in the near future.

I would also like to join you, Mr. President, in thanking our colleagues from Slovakia and Thailand for their tireless efforts to bring this exercise to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Metref (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We welcome the adoption by the General Assembly today of resolution 68/307, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representatives of Thailand and Slovakia, Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni and Mr. František Ružička, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, who so ably conducted the Group's discussions and complex negotiations. Even if the final results were up to our expectations, the process of the revitalization of the work of the Assembly, as its name suggests, will not stop here. We should continue to enhance the role and authority of the Assembly in global matters of concern to the international community. NAM considers that a reinvigorated General Assembly in a more responsive environment, exerting its role and authority fully, would significantly contribute to strengthening the broader United Nations system, improving international governance and enhancing multilateralism.

I would like to end by thanking all delegations involved for their active participation and for the flexibility they showed during the negotiations. I should not forget to thank my colleagues from the Non-Aligned Movement for their significant contributions and support.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): After all that has been said, I have nothing to add except to offer some simple but sincere words of thanks. I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, and the representatives who have spoken before me for their kind words addressed to me and to my co-facilitator, Ambassador František Ružička of Slovakia. I would also like to thank the delegations that made invaluable suggestions and proposals, which ultimately found widespread support. Such proposals enabled the Ad Hoc Working Group to move forward and come up with the resolution we have just adopted (68/307). I further thank the representatives of the various groups, notably the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union and others, as well as individual representatives. All approached the work in the necessary spirit of compromise, flexibility and give-and-take that enabled the Working Group to complete its work on time. My thanks also go to the Secretariat, led by Director Ion Botnaru and his able staff. We could not have completed our work without them and their essential institutional memory.

Most important, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my co-Chair, Mr. Ružička, and his able staff, who were a joy to work with. And finally, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the trust and confidence you placed in us. We also thank your staff, particularly Chef de Cabinet Paulette Bethel and her Deputy, Noel Sinclair, for the support and serious attention they gave this issue.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): I will be very brief. I join with my co-Chair in his thanks, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive atmosphere we had during our talks. I was honoured to work with the staff of the Secretariat, and I enjoyed discussions with representatives of Member States. Many of those discussions gave me hope for the future. I hope that the same spirit prevails in any future discussions that we may have the privilege to conduct.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 122?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 13 (*continued*)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Draft resolution (A/68/L.60)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 63 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 13 at its 36th plenary meeting, on 25 October 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia, to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.60.

Mr. Bame (Ethiopia): It is with honour that I introduce, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/68/L.60, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015". Further, Ethiopia is proud to chair the African Leaders Malaria Alliance.

First of all, it is my pleasure to express my deepest appreciation and sincere thanks to the co-facilitators of the draft resolution for their hard work and leadership in bringing it to its final form. I would also like to thank all Member States that were involved in the negotiation process for their active participation and support.

Between 2000 and 2012, a substantial scale-up of malaria interventions led to a 42 per cent decline in malaria mortality rates globally, saving an estimated 3.3 million lives. About 90 per cent, or 3 million, of those lives were saved in children under the age of 5 in Africa. The under-five mortality rate that is attributable to malaria in Africa has declined by 54 per cent. Global case incidence has been reduced by 25 per cent globally and by 31 per cent in Africa. That success has happened through the collaborative efforts of Governments, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, United Nations agencies, international organizations, development partners, foundations, civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders. Indeed, international disbursements expanded tenfold between 2004 and 2013.

Available funding is still substantially less than the $5.1 billion that is needed to achieve universal coverage of malaria interventions. International financing for malaria totalled $1.66 billion in 2011 and $1.94 billion in 2012. Domestic financing has shown a gradual rise and was estimated to be $522 million in 2012, with endemic countries in Africa and in South America committing most resources. Combining domestic and international funds, the resources available for malaria efforts globally were estimated to be just over $2.4 billion in 2012, leaving an annual gap of $2.7 billion.

While malaria is a preventable and treatable disease, it continues to have a devastating impact on people's health and livelihoods around the world. In 2012, approximately 3.4 billion people were at risk of the disease in 97 countries and territories, and an estimated 207 million cases occurred. The disease killed about 627,000 people, mostly children under 5 years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a multi-pronged strategy to reduce the malaria burden, including vector control interventions, preventive therapies, diagnostic testing, quality-assured treatment and strong malaria surveillance.

The draft resolution, adopted on an annual basis, is critical because it provides a rallying message for countries and guideposts to key development partners, such as the African Development Bank; the Global Fund; the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; the World Bank; the United Kingdom, France and the United States; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other stakeholders, to ensure that we build sustainable funding plans and ensure quality financial management, including priority-setting and accountability for results.

This year's draft resolution highlights substantial and technical updates and new developments with regard to resolution 67/299, adopted last year. The new components are as follows.

The draft resolution recalls the commitment made by African leaders to end the epidemic of malaria by ensuring universal and equitable access to quality health care and by improving health systems and health financing, contained in the African Union's Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

It welcomes the creation of the Asia-Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance, recognizing the leadership and commitment of the Alliance to achieve the 2015 targets and encouraging the members of the Alliance to continue to provide political leadership at the highest level in the fight against malaria in the Asia-Pacific region.

It takes note of the World Health Organization's framework for action for an emergency response to artemisinin resistance in the Greater Mekong subregion of South-East Asia, launched in April 2013.

It expresses awareness that recent successes in prevention and control are fragile and can be maintained only with sufficient and sustained national and international investment to fund global malaria-control efforts fully.

It recognizes the importance in the struggle against malaria of the WHO Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property adopted by the World Health Assembly on 24 May 2008.

It calls upon malaria-endemic countries, development partners and the international community to support the timely replacement of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization on the service lives of the nets in order to prevent the risk of malaria resurgence and a reversal of the gains made to date.

It recognizes the importance of a multisectoral strategy to advance global control efforts, invites malaria-endemic countries to consider adopting and implementing the Multisectoral Action Framework for Malaria developed by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the United Nations Development Programme, and encourages regional and intersectoral collaboration, both public and private, at all levels, especially in education, health, agriculture, economic development and the environment, to advance malaria- control objectives.

It further recognizes the need to strengthen malaria surveillance and data quality in all endemic regions to enable Member States to direct financial resources to populations most in need and to respond effectively to disease outbreaks.

It calls upon Member States and the international community to strengthen mechanisms for country-based coordination of technical assistance to achieve alignment over the best approaches to implement WHO technical guidance and to mobilize to support the sharing and analysis of best practices to address urgent programmatic challenges, to improve monitoring and evaluation and to conduct regular financial planning and gap analysis.

It recognizes the need for political commitment and financial support beyond 2015 to sustain and expand the achievements against malaria and to meet the international malaria targets through prevention and malaria control efforts to end the epidemic, while acknowledging the remarkable progress in combating malaria to date.

In order to add greater value to this very important draft resolution, we hope that next year will make more progress. We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus as in previous years.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.60, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those representatives listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.60: Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.60?

Draft resolution A/68/L.60 was adopted (resolution 68/308).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 13?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/68/L.61)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly adopted resolution 68/6, under agenda items 14 and 118, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", at its 32nd plenary meeting, on 9 October 2013, and considered agenda item 14, jointly with agenda item 118 and agenda item 125, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", at its 54th plenary meeting, on 20 November 2013. Members

will also recall that the Assembly adopted resolution 68/304 at its 107th plenary meeting on 9 September 2014.

Regarding the report of the General Assembly on sustainable development goals, circulated in document A/68/970, I should now like to provide a clarification on the context under which the Assembly would consider the draft resolution before it.

First, a corrigendum to the report of the Open Working Group will be issued in order to incorporate the omitted names of Member States that have already provided statements and explanations of position to the report, as reflected in section III, paragraph 13, of the report. Delegations are requested to communicate to the Secretariat any omissions regarding the list of Member States contained in paragraph 13 of the report relating to statements or explanations of position.

Secondly, the footnote contained in section III, paragraph 13, of the report will be revised and would read as follows:

> "The compilation of texts of statements and explanations of position made by Member States to the report are contained in the addendum to the present report, issued as document A/68/970/Add.1."

The addendum to the report containing the texts of the reservations by Member States will be issued as an official document of the General Assembly under the symbol A/68/970/Add. 1. Member States wishing to have their statements and explanations of position on the report of the Open Working Group included in the compilation document should provide to the General Assembly secretariat their reservations to the report in writing, if they have not done so already.

Before proceeding further and in accordance with the agreement reached at the consultations held prior to the start of this meeting, I would like to orally revise draft resolution A/68/L.61.

I invite members to turn their attention to paragraph 2 of the draft text. Paragraph 2 will now read as follows:

> "Decides that the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals contained in the report shall be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiating process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly."

Based on the orally amended clarification just provided, we shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.61.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.61, entitled "Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/288", as orally revised. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.61, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/68/L.61, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 68/309).

The President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, very much for all your hard work.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77).

The Group is pleased that resolution 68/309 has been adopted by consensus by the General Assembly. The decision to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) was one of the landmark decisions taken by our leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Rio+20 also mandated that the SDGs should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

The members of the Group of 77 and China attach a high degree of importance to the outcome document (A/68/970) of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals containing a proposal on SDGs. That outcome document was arrived at through painstaking and intensive work stretching over a period of almost 18 months, during which time the members of the G-77 participated constructively and in good faith.

The Group of 77 and China firmly believes that the outcome of that intergovernmental process needs to be fully preserved and should not be reopened or renegotiated. We are happy, therefore, that the resolution that we have adopted today clearly recognizes that this

proposal will be the basis for integrating the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda. We also note that it is important that all reservations made by members of the Group must be faithfully compiled in an official document that should be clearly referenced in the report of the Open Working Group, as you, Mr. President, have established. We have taken note of the your oral confirmation in that regard.

The Group of 77 and China remains fully committed to participating actively and constructively in the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda to reflect the common voice and interests of the developing countries.

With that being said, let me thank you, Mr. President, once again and all stakeholders and our partners.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I would like to take the opportunity to express to you, Mr. President, and to the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals our sincere appreciation for your hard work, which enabled all of us to reach this final stage. The Arab Group had engaged actively and constructively in all the meetings, deliberations and consultations of the Open Working Group.

With regard to the particular issues falling under Goal 16 of the proposed sustainable development goals, entitled "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels", the Arab Group voiced its concerns at a very early stage regarding the potential risk of adopting a selective and reductionist approach when addressing those issues. The way in which discussions and consultations evolved in that regard proved that the concerns of the Arab Group were valid and well founded, as some Member States tried to impose their own vision regarding those issues, thus excluding the very valid concerns and critical interests of the Arab Group.

The Arab Group delivered statements during the 10th and 11th meetings of the Open Working Group whereby it acknowledged the intrinsic link between development, peace and security. However, the Group reiterated that a detailed discussion was needed and should take place in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. Furthermore, the Group reaffirmed that, by all means, any discussion on peaceful and stable societies should take into consideration and address Arab concerns in that regard, in particular those related to ending foreign occupation. Therefore, the Group requested the inclusion under Goal 16 of the following targets: first, ending all forms of colonial domination and foreign occupation in order to achieve sustainable development for all; secondly, strengthening adherence to international law by all stakeholders, including States, international organizations and financial institutions, to achieve an international order based on the rule of the law; and, thirdly, intensifying international cooperation in the field of countering terrorism, in particular by addressing its root causes, as they are an obstacle to achieving sustainable development.

The Arab Group reaffirmed that it cannot accept a selective approach when addressing the issue of achieving a peaceful and stable society in the context of sustainable development.

The Arab Group regretted that the proposed target of ending all forms of foreign occupation and colonial domination was not included under Goal 16, where it naturally belongs. In that respect, the Group went along with the approval of sending the proposal on SDGs to the General Assembly with the understanding that target 16.1 on significantly reducing all forms of violence applies to ending foreign occupation, as it is one of the most extreme forms of violence.

The Group's understanding also is that target 16.3 on promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels applies to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab occupied territories, through the full implementation of all General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council resolutions on ending foreign occupation and colonial domination in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and other occupied Arab territories, as well as the application of the relevant provisions of international law and international humanitarian law, including the four Geneva Conventions on the occupied Arab territories.

The Arab Group is also very concerned about the lack of any reference under Goal 16 to the issue of illegal unilateral economic sanctions, which has been raised by some Arab countries. This issue has been a major impediment severely affecting the economy and development of many countries, and it has played a major role in undermining States' sovereignty. Since

Goal 16 calls for providing access to justice for all, this issue should have been addressed and duly reflected in the Open Working Group's report (A/68/970). The Arab Group has requested that its statements and letters dated 24 July and 29 August to the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group and to the President of the General Assembly, respectively, as well as a letter dated 25 July from the Arab members of the Open Working Group to the co-Chairs, be noted as part of the official record and in the Open Working Group's report. So far, however, neither the letter nor the Arab Group's position and reservations have been reflected in the report.

We are comfortable, Mr. President, with the explanation you gave about this matter at the beginning of today's meeting. Nonetheless, the Arab Group would like to reiterate its request to have its position and that of its members duly reflected in the report. We have also requested that our letter dated 29 August, along with its attachments, be circulated as an official General Assembly document under agenda item 14, entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields"; sub-item (a) of agenda item 19, entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development"; and agenda item 118, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". We also request that letter be attached to the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Leiva Roesch (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Sir, for all your efforts in introducing resolution 68/309, which contains the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970).

Our delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We have decided to speak because Guatemala and Colombia were members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of all delegations in formulating the proposed goals. We are also grateful for the dedication and leadership in this long process of the Working Group's co-Chairs, Ambassador Kamau of Kenya and Ambassador Kőrösi of Hungary.

We should emphasize that the Open Working Group's final product was developed through a process that was open, transparent and somewhat different from the traditional format of United Nations negotiations, with which we are all familiar. At the beginning, we all expected that negotiations would be carried out behind closed doors and among the designated members alone; instead, however, the process involved every delegation of the United Nations and included contributions from civil society as well. Now we have a proposal that emerged from a universal process with goals that are also universally applicable.

Our delegation recognizes that the document is not perfect; we would have liked a more limited set of goals and targets. However, we believe that it should be considered in its entirety, and in that regard we believe that the Open Working Group's final document should be the basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. We are also pleased that the document includes global priorities that had previously been relegated to the margins of the development agenda, such as Goal 13 — "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" — and Goal 16, "Promote peaceful societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

In our view, the links between the rule of law and sustainable development are undeniable. Strengthening the rule of law in order to create an environment conducive to sustainable development should be a priority, and for that reason Goal 16.3 is of special interest.

Finally, our delegation was surprised that our reservations were not reflected in the report, and we ask that they be included in a corrected version of the report.

Mr. Mohammad Pour Ferami (Islamic Republic of Iran): I, too, would like to thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this important meeting.

I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I thank him and the other members of his delegation for their hard work in the past year.

I would also like to express my delegation's deep gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Hungary for their excellent stewardship of this process, which produced results after almost 18 months of serious consultations.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran participated very constructively in this process, along with almost all the other delegations involved. We believe that in all its aspects, positive and negative, the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970) is the beloved offspring of us all. We may have complaints and concerns or be dissatisfied with certain parts of it, but, overall, it is our brainchild. That is how my delegation believes it should now be regarded and integrated into the next process of drafting the post-2015 development agenda. We really appreciate the amendments introduced into the final draft of the resolution (resolution 68/309) as compared to the early version. As paragraph 246 of the Outcome Document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288) says, the sustainable development goals "should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015".

My delegation's final comment on this report, as we clearly expressed on the day of its adoption in the Open Working Group, is that we have serious reservations about certain parts of the document that are contrary to my country's policies, practices and circumstances. I would like to once again put those reservations on record. They will be submitted in writing to the Secretariat, and I ask that they be considered as an integral part of the Open Working Group's report. Once again, we deeply appreciate all the energy and effort expended by the co-Chairs of the Group, and hope that the report will be a good basis for integrating its goals into the post-2015 development agenda.

Ms. Cousens (United States of America): We welcome the adoption today of resolution 68/309, as amended, on the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970), which represents an important way station on the road to 2015.

We would first like to express our sincere appreciation for your leadership on this issue, Mr. President, and for the focus you have encouraged during your tenure in office on setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. I would also like to warmly thank the Open Working Group co-Chairs, Ambassadors Kamau and Kőrösi, for their skilful leadership, patience and good faith in bringing the Group to a fruitful conclusion. Together we did indeed travel a long way.

We believe that the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals helped build substantial common understanding among all of us about the historic opportunity that we have in the post-2015 development agenda to make truly decisive gains against some of humanity's greatest challenges — extreme poverty, disease, inequality between women and men, and so on — to name just a few. The Open Working Group proposal gives us an important point of departure for our work ahead.

We are pleased by many issues that are prominently treated in that proposal: the strong recognition of the need and potential to eradicate extreme poverty in a generation; recognition of the power of sustained and inclusive economic growth to drive poverty reduction and broader development; a clear and ambitious target to cut maternal mortality; the need to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic; a standalone goal on gender equality and empowerment, including recognition of women's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and critical recognition of the fact that peaceful societies with capable and inclusive institutions are essential underpinnings of sustainable development. We also welcome the strong treatment of climate change in this agenda.

We were not able to agree on every issue in the proposal, and we remind all colleagues of our explanation of position and our reservations following the conclusion of the Open Working Group. But where the proposal was not able to find common ground, we continue to believe that common ground remains possible.

We now look forward to the fall and to the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the issues elaborated on in the Open Working Group's proposal. We look forward to the Secretary-General's synthesis report, which can make a vital contribution to our efforts, along with other critical inputs. We anticipate a productive start to intergovernmental negotiations in the new year.

We want to reinforce our commitment to working in close cooperation with all partners as we embark on the next phase. We have vital input still to consider from many quarters, including from wider stakeholders in all our countries. The United States particularly welcomes

this resolution's recognition that these other inputs will be considered in our deliberations to come.

The process that led us to arrive at the Open Working Group's proposal has given us an important foundation for the next phase of our work. We are confident that together in the days ahead we will be able to craft a compelling, transformative and impactful post-2015 development agenda for all of our citizens.

Finally, if I may say, we do not believe that today's meeting is the place to reiterate any specific reservations, and we regret that some delegations have raised political issues that do not belong in this meeting and should not be addressed here and distract us from our task today.

Mr. Msosa (Malawi): At the very outset, the African Group would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The African Group would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, whose goal was to receive and agree on the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as mandated by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The African Group wishes to extend its profound appreciation to the co-Chairs of the historic Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, whose devotion and exemplary leadership were evident once again in the informal informal consultations convened on your behalf, Sir, on Monday this week. The Group wishes to reaffirm the fact that despite their retirement, they remain our dear co-Chairs, whose guidance and inspiration shall be instrumental in the upcoming post-2015 development agenda process.

We have received the report of the Open Working Group, which contains goals and targets in whose development all Member States and others, including representatives of civil society, the scientific community and the business sector, participated.

The African Group has insisted that the report should also include the observations and reservations made by Member States during and after the final session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The African Group deemed it appropriate that the comprehensive and complex character of the Open Working Group process should be matched with an outcome document of similar magnitude that makes reference to elements in the proposals that were clearly opposed by some delegations.

For the African Group, the consideration of the proposed sustainable development goals includes the reservations entered into against some aspect of the report. They go hand in hand. The African Group was confident that the Secretariat would heed this call in the spirit of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and consensus, characteristics that are widely associated with the Open Working Group process. We thank the President of the General Assembly for his understanding, willingness and support in finding a way to accommodate the observations and reservations of Member States.

The fulfilment of this important task of receiving and agreeing on the report of the Open Working Group signifies the beginning of an important journey that will take us through the next phase of intergovernmental negotiations and, ultimately, the adoption of the post-2015 development goals, in September 2015.

The Group notes with great pleasure that this Hall has unanimously agreed that the proposals of the Open Working Group shall serve as the basis for integrating the sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. This augurs well, given the Group's firm conviction that the Open Working Group package should be neither reopened nor renegotiated. In that regard, the African Group looks forward to participating constructively in the upcoming intergovernmental process and pledges its continued support and cooperation to ensure a successful conclusion of the said process.

Ms. Miyano (Japan): The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is the outcome of a collective effort over a period of more than 18 months, and Japan welcomes the adoption of draft resolution A/68/L.61. I would like to express sincere appreciation for your leadership, Mr. President, and for the excellent and instrumental leadership of both co-Chairs of the Open Working Group, Ambassador Kamau and Ambassador Kőrösi. I should like also to acknowledge the efforts of all involved.

The report shows that collectively we can reach the goal of achieving inclusive, sustainable development. After today, with this very important report in hand, we will proceed to the next phase, towards the negotiations on the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. We have already received significant other inputs for

this purpose from the report of the High-level Panel and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, as well as various other inputs, including from civil society and other stakeholders. We expect the report of the Secretary-General to be a comprehensive document encompassing all of the input in a balanced manner, so that the intergovernmental negotiations can build on the report.

We believe that these inputs are all equally important and available and should be considered in the next phase, so that we will be able to establish a strong and transformative agenda that can be implemented by a wide range of stakeholders.

We joined the consensus on this resolution on the clear understanding that it does not change the established practices of the United Nations and that nothing in this resolution requires Member States to accept any reservation made by other Member States. Japan has also made reservations on the report, but we do not expect other Member States to accept these reservations.

We will continue to be engaged in, work hard for and contribute to this process.

Mr. Narang (India): We commend the General Assembly for having adopted by consensus draft resolution A/68/L.61. The adoption of this resolution brings to a successful close the journey that we collectively undertook in June 2012 on crafting an agreement on a set of sustainable development goals. The path was rocky at times and our collective will was tested, not least by the fact that this was perhaps the first time that the global community had tried to fashion a consensus template of concrete goals and targets on such a large canvas. Translating the global discourse of ideas on sustainable development into an actionable agenda was never going to be easy, yet the final outcome, though clearly not perfect, is testimony to the power and indispensability of multilateralism to finding common solutions to the problems we collectively face.

We would like to place on record our sincere appreciation for the two co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Kenya, for their outstanding leadership of the process. We also thank the Secretariat for its exceptional support for the Open Working Group.

Resolution 68/309, adopted today, correctly notes that the proposal of the Open Working Group must be the basis for integrating sustainable development goals (SDGs) into the post-2015 development agenda. While other inputs are undoubtedly important, it must be borne in mind that the Open Working Group is the only intergovernmental process so far that has had the mandate to negotiate and develop a set of sustainable development goals. That intergovernmental process was also unique in that it enabled the effective engagement of all the relevant stakeholders. The range of inputs received from United Nations agencies, international organizations, major groups and civil society greatly enriched the discussions and outcome of the Open Working Group.

The work of the Open Working Group will also feed into the synthesis report of the Secretary-General, to which we look forward. It would be useful to recall that the mandate for that report is to synthesize the range of inputs available and to propose a coherent vision to help Member States as they embark upon the process of negotiating the post-2015 development agenda. In other words, its mandate is not to propose a new or alternative set of goals or a counter-narrative to the outcome of the intergovernmental Open Working Group.

India engaged constructively and in good faith in all the meetings of the Open Working Group and contributed to building consensus on key issues of interest to developing countries. The final outcome of the Open Working Group is a broad template, but also a delicately crafted political compromise. The outcome clearly places eradication of poverty at the centre of the development agenda, builds on the Millennium Development Goals, reaffirms the continued validity of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as the bedrock of international cooperation, emphasizes the role of robust economic growth, industrialization and full employment, emphasizes in a balanced way the three dimensions of sustainable development, puts in place ambitious action to rationalize consumption patterns and efforts to preserve the environment, and integrates, last but not least, means of implementation as an integral part of the goals set. Those elements, in our view, must be preserved going forward.

At the same time, India does not necessarily agree with each and every element included in the final package. While we were happy to join the consensus on the document, we remain unconvinced as to the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on important but extraneous issues, such as peace, security and the rule of

law, which, in our view, while exceptionally important, do not form an organic part of the developmental landscape of the SDGs.

We look forward to examining the integration of the issues I have mentioned in greater detail as we engage in the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Several other parts of the Open Working Group outcome, on the other hand, clearly remain ripe for further work. The means of implementation included in the final document (A/68/970) are, in our view, still too weak. We look forward to the outcome of the Financing for Development Conference to be held next July to substantially strengthen the means of implementation of the SDGs as part of the future agenda.

Mr. President, you can count on India's support and active engagement on the road ahead for crafting a truly transformative post-2015 development agenda, one which enables us to end poverty and leaves no one behind.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

At the outset, we would like to once more warmly thank Ambassadors Kamau and Kőrösi for the absolutely magnificent job they did in steering the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to a very impressive outcome in spite of the considerable challenges they had to face up until the very end. Their co-chairmanship certainly raised the bar for such future endeavours. We would also like to thank you, Mr. President, as well as your team, for the very valuable support you have lent to the process throughout your tenure, not least in the last few days.

The mandate set out in paragraph 248 of the Rio outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) for the Open Working Group to prepare a proposal for sustainable development goals (SDGs) for consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly was undoubtedly a complex one. As we noted at the closing meeting of the Open Working Group, we were happy to see that mandate brought to a successful conclusion. Beyond the very informative and helpful conversations, including with academia and civil society, the in-depth discussions we had during the last year and a half allowed us to consider a wide range of issues as part of the post-2015 goals and targets. As a result, the Open Working Group made considerable progress during the past 18 months, and the proposal contained in its report (A/68/970) will clearly provide a very important input to the intergovernmental process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, which will lead to the finalization of the post-2015 development agenda and the summit in September 2015.

Of course, there are several questions that remain to be addressed ahead of the summit if we want to set out an ambitious and implementable post-2015 agenda. We noted that several delegations, including from within the European Union, made statements in the closing meeting of the Open Working Group. We hope that the discussions that we will have in the framework of the intergovernmental process will allow us to agree on a truly universal, comprehensive and transformative development agenda.

As we agreed in the September 2013 resolution calling for the 2015 summit and adopting the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 68/6), the intergovernmental process will include inputs from all stakeholders, including civil society, scientific and knowledge institutions, parliaments, local authorities and the private sector. All those inputs will be very important. The report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing is also a crucial input. All of that will be synthesized in the report of the Secretary-General, which we trust will greatly help all of us to move our discussions forward.

We are fully committed to agreeing to a truly transformative post-2015 development agenda that reinforces the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development and of which the sustainable development goals will be a key part. We look forward to working with all partners in the weeks and months ahead with that common objective.

Under our co-Chairs' sterling leadership, we have made impressive progress, which it is in everyone's duty now to use to good account.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The LDC Group aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The LDC Group pays tribute to the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals for their appreciable and tireless work and for all the efforts that they have made. We would also like to thank them for the many contributions and proposals that they were able to elicit from the Member States and various groups.

We are also grateful for your efforts to lead us in our work, Mr. President. The outcome will be an essential achievement of your term as President of the General Assembly.

The LDC Group is pleased that it was able to take the floor at various stages in the approximately 18 months of negotiations to voice its concerns with respect to the formulation of targets and goals identified. The results that we have achieved are to the credit of the revitalized multilateral approach that the challenges to humankind compel us to adopt. Those results appear as a compromise and just one stage in the process of drafting the post-2015 development agenda. Our Group wishes to stress the need to take into account the reservations expressed by certain States without challenging the coherence of the document (A/68/970), or indeed the substance of what was agreed as the basis of consensus. We commend the factors the document covers, in particular the concept of peaceful societies as a component of the achievement of sustainable development goals, since in order to have development we must have peace, and, conversely, there can be no peace without development.

However, it is clear that no State or group can claim to be completely satisfied or to have seen all its concerns taken into account. As far as the least developed countries are concerned, they reserve the right to return, in future negotiations, to complaints they had that were not fully addressed during the negotiations. We hope that the report of the Secretary-General will reflect the international community's commitment to the concerns of the LDCs that were not reflected in the report of the Open Working Group.

The LDCs are the poorest, the most vulnerable and the countries most affected by a lack of resources, by various crises and by climate change. Throughout the negotiations leading to the report we made significant contributions and submitted many proposals in that regard. We stand ready and mobilized to continue working with other groups and States on efforts that will best contribute to the development of the new phase we are about to undertake, through to the end of the process and the adoption of what we hope will be a balanced and inclusive programme. The LDC Group echoes the commendations that have already been expressed to Ambassadors Kamau and Kőrösi for their wisdom and the great qualities of leadership they have shown throughout the entire process.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): Speaking on behalf of Nicaragua as well as Brazil, we recognize your leadership, Mr. President, and the excellent work of the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Ambassadors Kamau and Kőrösi, who were essential to the achievement of what we consider the groundbreaking outcome reflected in the Open Working Group's report (A/68/970).

Nicaragua and Brazil are pleased that we were able to adopt by consensus resolution 68/309, which clearly establishes the primacy of the Open Working Group's outcome as the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. We must fully respect the integrity of the work of the Open Working Group. Its legitimacy speaks for itself and is unrivalled. In recognition of that, and of the value of the outcome, Nicaragua and Brazil raised no reservations, and we call on all members that have done so, or believe that this is only a way station on the road to the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda, to refrain from launching initiatives in the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session that could unravel the delicate construction of the great work achieved.

The means for implementing the report's proposals will have to be brought up to standards that match the ambitions of the goals and targets we have negotiated. The report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing for Sustainable Development and the outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development will provide additional elements in that regard. We will also count on the continuation of consultations on a technology facilitation mechanism in the context of the post-2015 process. The Secretary-General's synthesis report is awaited with great interest. It should fully consider and respect the work of members in mobilizing United Nations resources and support.

We look forward to engaging constructively in the finalization of this new vision for international

development cooperation that is universal in nature yet takes into account the shared but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries — an outcome that is a process that should lead to a new effort within the United Nations on cooperation that is socially inclusive and promotes members' economic growth within a framework of sustainability.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): I would first like to align my delegation's position with the statements delivered by the representatives of Bolivia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Malawi, on behalf of the African Group.

Nigeria welcomes the submission of the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970) and commends the Working Group's co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Hungary, for their leadership, patience, perseverance and presence of mind in steering the often difficult negotiations to a successful conclusion. We congratulate all Member States on the accomplishment of this landmark outcome through very difficult and sometimes protracted negotiations, and for showing commitment, accommodation, expansiveness of spirit and professionalism in their engagement in the process. We thank you, Mr. President, for lending your support and the weight of your Office to this process. We commend the Secretary-General and his staff for the interest they have shown throughout the negotiation process.

We particularly welcome the inclusive and transparent nature of the work of the Open Working Group. Its universality gives it broad legitimacy and credibility. Nigeria approached the negotiations with an open mind and keen interest in contributing to their success. In substantive terms, we welcome the prominence that the report gives to the eradication of poverty. That is an issue fundamental to Nigeria and the entire African region, for obvious reasons. We stress that the successful achievement of the global development agenda must hinge on a sustainable partnership between and among different countries and regions, and on establishing the means of its implementation. The report underscores those two critical elements, which Nigeria hopes will be central to the global development framework beyond 2015. We sincerely hope that the Secretary-General's synthesis report will take into account the priorities set for the African region in the common African position.

The adoption of a new document emanating from the international intergovernmental process in the United Nations is obviously important to Member States. Ultimately, the Member States are the entities that will be called on to translate the provisions and content of such documents into policy at the national level. Considering that such documents will likely give rise to commitments and obligations, Member States will rightly feel entitled to express reservations on provisions that may conflict with their national policies, legislative arcs, religious beliefs and cultural values. That becomes more important particularly if the documents adopted result in the establishment of benchmarks and timelines for implementing their provisions. For those reasons, Nigeria has expressed reservations about some aspects of the document, notably on the grounds of lack of clarity and relevance to issues of sustainable development. In due course, in response to a valuable suggestion made today, Nigeria will submit in writing the reservations that it raised at various times during the negotiations of the Open Working Group.

Mr. Otto (Palau): We thank this body for adopting resolution 68/309 by consensus. Such an adoption is a recognition of the hard work by all Members of the United Nations and the invaluable input of civil society. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in the process and, in particular, to express our gratitude to the co-Chairs, Ambassador Kamau and Ambassador Kőrösi, for their patience, hard work and sterling leadership. We also want to thank all the negotiators for the spririt of cooperation and respect, which allowed us to develop goals that we trust will lead us to complete the unfinished tasks of the Millennium Development Goals and will help all nations towards sustainable development.

We take the floor particularly to express our gratitude and encouragement for the fact that, together, we duly recognize the importance of mental health and well-being, which are so fundamental to healthy, strong and productive societies. We trust that that will allow us to understand that, in these days of continued and frequent natural disasters, calamities, man-made strife and sadness, building resilience involves psychological elements in addition to environmental infrastucture.

Mr. Viera (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would like to start by thanking the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group for their efforts in leading all this work during more than a year and a half of meetings. I would also like to thank the United Nations, the Secretariat, Member States, members of the Group and the lead groups, including civil society organizations, which have been supporting us with contributions and backing many of the proposals for such goals.

We know that countries have different models, instruments and focuses on the basis on their national priorities in order to achieve sustainable development. For that reason, the report before us (A/68/970) contains various visions, which is not ideal. The differences should be clearly reflected and show the efforts of the entire international community. We believe that adequate measures for each of the sustainable development goals mentioned in the report, as well as strengthening the global alliance for sustainable development, are fundamental requirements without which the entire development agenda may prove futile without any possibility of success.

Unfortunately, the clear and direct requests of several delegations were not properly reflected in the report of the Working Group. That is probably owing to a lack of political will by certain members and to shortcomings in some of the procedural aspects of the work of the Working Group.

Finally, we would like to highlight the fact that the next challenge for the post-2015 development agenda should be to establish a transparent, fair and equitable international consultation process so that we can produce a negotiated outcome document that fully takes into account the results of the various follow-up procedures provided for in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the main summits and conferences on economic, social and environmental issues.

Mr. Neelam (Australia): At the outset, let me add Australia's thanks for the commitment and hard work of the co-Chairs, Ambassador Kamau and Ambassador Kőrösi, and all those involved in reaching the outcome document of the Open Working Group (A/68/970), including Member States, their negotiators and civil society.

Australia welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/309, on the conclusion of the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which represents the collective efforts and the spirit of cooperation of the international community.

The outcome of the Open Working Group is without doubt a critical input into the Secretary-General's synthesis report and the next stage of the intergovernmental negotiations.

I would like to note, as we have before, that while Australia sees the outcome of the Open Working Group as the end product of the Group's work, we interpret the basis as a starting point of the next stage of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda are clearly mandated to also consider a range of other inputs, not least the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (A/68/852/Add.1). That was reflected by our troika in our statement at the conclusion of the Open Working Group's work, as well as by many other participants in that process, and is in line with the Rio+20 mandate (see resolution 66/288, annex) and subsequent resolutions.

Australia has engaged in good faith throughout the process. I would like to reaffirm that we will continue to cooperate by working with all parties towards the conclusion of a meaningful and effective post-2015 development agenda.

The President: We have heard the last statement in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 68/309.

I would like to express my personal thanks and appreciation to the panel of representatives of Kenya for their able stewardship as co-Chairs of the Open Working Group and for bringing us to this point today. I would like to invite members to join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.109

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

109th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/68/L.62, circulated under sub-item (a) of agenda item 19, entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development".

Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 19 to the Second Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 19 directly in plenary meeting and to proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 19 (continued)

Sustainable development

a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Draft resolution (A/68/L.62)

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.62, entitled "Four one-day structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.62?

Draft resolution A/68/L.62 was adopted (resolution 68/310).

The President: I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Poulsen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We would first like to thank our co-moderators, Ambassador Seger and Ambassador De Aguiar Patriota, for their tireless efforts in bringing forward the structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development,

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transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. We take note of the Secretary-General's report (A/68/310) on the structured dialogues, which, in its recommendations for the way forward, outlines three functions for a technology facilitation mechanism: mapping of existing technology facilitation mechanisms, frameworks and processes on clean and environmentally sound technologies through creation of an online knowledge-sharing platform; improved inter-agency coherence on technology facilitation through better coordination; and further promotion of technology needs assessment and capacity-building.

While we do not necessarily agree with all the details in the descriptions, we acknowledge that the three functions were indeed identified in the dialogues as important gaps, and there was a general sentiment among Member States that addressing them would promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. We therefore believe that the further elaboration of these functions must be at the core of our future technology discussions. Conversely, and while we remain open to considering further ideas and proposals, we believe that we should not devote additional time to discussing those elements on which it clearly appeared in the structured dialogues that no consensus is emerging.

Ms. Onishi (Japan): My delegation would first like to thank Mr. Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland, and Mr. De Aguiar Patriota, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, and their team for their hard work both as co-moderators of the four one-day structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and as co-facilitators of resolution 68/310, just adopted.

Japan is one of the countries that have been keen to share their knowledge and technologies with the international community. We are very proud of our many contributions to the world in this area over the past several decades. We fully recognize that without technology it would be impossible to achieve any development in any country. However, we still believe that creating a new mechanism within the United Nations is not the best or most relevant solution for the development, transfer and dissemination of technologies.

Our main finding from the dialogue was the importance of creating an environment conducive to facilitating the engagement of the private sector, which is the primary developer and owner of technologies. Such an environment would include a sound regulatory and policy framework in recipient countries, including the protection of intellectual property rights, in order to encourage the private sector to continue and to increase its innovation of new technologies. On the basis of this fundamental idea, my delegation stands ready to continue discussion on how best to address this important topic in the General Assembly at its next session.

Mr. Mukerji (India): My delegation would like to join others in commending Ambassadors Seger of Switzerland and De Aguiar Patriota of Brazil for their exemplary role as co-facilitators for resolution 68/310, which we have adopted today.

We commend the General Assembly for adopting by consensus resolution 68/310, on structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. By adopting the resolution, the Assembly has provided a mandate for the continuation of meaningful discussions on the issue of technology cooperation and linked it with the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. That is something that we welcome, not least because, in our view, the mandate of resolution 68/210 remains unfulfilled.

The resolution we have adopted today mandates the continuation of discussions based on the recommendations of the President of the General Assembly emanating from the four structured dialogues held during the sixty-eighth session. However, it is clear that both the summary presented by the moderators and the recommendations of the President of the General Assembly build on the discussions on the issue over the last two years. In fact, it is quite natural to consider the discussions so far on the issue as part of a continuum and an organic whole starting from the mandate given by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and including the two reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/348 and A/68/310), which unequivocally recommended the creation of such a mechanism, the discussions in the workshops during the sixty-seventh session and, of course, the four structured dialogues convened during the current session. As we seek to reach a conclusion on the issue during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, it will be our understanding that our discussions will

build on and base themselves on all those inputs and processes since Rio+20.

The Indian delegation has long maintained that without a collaborative approach on international cooperation on technology transfer and diffusion, the global achievement of sustainable development will remain a mirage. The global nature of the challenges that we confront makes it imperative that a public-goods approach to global resources is matched by an equally constructive approach to technology cooperation. As the international community embarks on a pathbreaking exercise to translate the normative discourse of ideas on sustainable development into actionable commitments through the sustainable development goals, it is all the more important that discussions on technology transfer and cooperation also move from long-winded debates into meaningful and action-oriented outcomes.

Mr. President, you can count on the Indian delegation's constructive and proactive engagement on the issue in the months ahead. We consider a meaningful outcome on technology cooperation in the form of the creation of a facilitation mechanism as an indispensable part of a successful negotiation on the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I wish to take this opportunity to convey my delegation's highest appreciation to Ambassador Paul Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland, and Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, for ably co-moderating the series of structured dialogues.

The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) acknowledged technology as one of the key means of sustainable development implementation, along with finance, capacity-building and trade. We are therefore pleased by the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970), which affirmed technology as a vital component of means of implementation for sustainable development globally. Technology is a vital means for overcoming obstacles to economic expansion and growth, particularly for developing countries. Technology also serves to achieve specific development goals through a more sustainable development path.

Despite that necessity, developing countries are still facing major challenges in advancing the use of technology. I am glad that technology in the context of the sustainable development has received a dedicated discussion within the General Assembly. The four structured dialogues give us a good picture of the overall potential for building a technology facilitation mechanism. However, we have come to understand through the summary of the dialogues presented by the facilitators that more discussion is needed and that the moderators have recommended further discussions in the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly based on a number of elements and functions having to do with technology facilitation.

In that regard, Indonesia welcomes the recommendations as presented in resolution 68/310 and looks forward to seeing the process fulfil its objective of reaching a conclusion at the sixty-ninth session on a United Nations technology facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. For that purpose, Indonesia stands ready to support the process in a constructive manner.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The four structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies have reconfirmed the importance of technology to development solutions and generated ideas about possible next steps. My delegation sincerely thanks everyone who contributed to a productive discussion in those dialogues. At the same time, they also leave us, in our view, with significant work still to do.

In our view, it is critical to understand the issue as broader than the narrower question of technology transfer and to look at what drives and sustains technological advance innovation and application. That necessarily entails assessing the institutional conditions that promote innovation, technology adaptation and diffusion and the human capital requirements for deepening of knowledge and expertise. It requires looking at diverse solution-oriented forms of international development cooperation. It thus also involves questions of investment, entrepreneurship, capacity-building, science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, especially for women, and enabling policy and regulatory environments, particularly around intellectual property. The work that has been done on technology transfer can be a basis for what, in our view, is still needed, namely, a

more substantial, independent, analytical exercise in due diligence and a much better understanding and fuller range of views from the private sector, which we believe is both a key source and supporter of innovation, research and commercialization of new technology.

The United States also believes that in addition to preparing for the absorption and adoption of new technologies, receiving countries must implement strong legal regimes to help protect innovations. That includes creating rules that stimulate competition, entrepreneurship, commerce and investment, and a robust and well-enforced intellectual property regime. Without that kind of intellectual property protection, many innovators would be unwilling to transfer or share their new technologies.

On the issue of linking the discussion of technology transfer to the post-2015 development agenda, it is important to clarify that what the Open Working Group sent forward (A/68/970) was not a consensus document but a working proposal that reflects differing views, including in relation to technology, which was minimally discussed in the Group. We therefore remain committed to working with all colleagues toward formulating the post-2015 development agenda in the context of our financing for development discussions and in the context of any follow-on to those dialogues, in order to ensure the holding of substantive and productive discussions that can help us chart a path forward.

Ms. Carayanides (Australia): I thank the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Switzerland for their work as co-Chairs on this issue. Australia remains committed to continuing discussions on technology transfer and facilitation under resolution 68/310, just adopted.

We note the mandate for continuing discussions is focused on environmentally sound technologies, and while we recognize the post-2015 context, our view is that those discussions do not encompass technology facilitation writ large. We also view that intellectual property is not a barrier or a constraint to technology transfer or facilitation. Rather, it is critical to the development of new and innovative technologies. The creation of domestic environments conducive to investment and innovation is the best method to boost countries' technological capacity, and the use by States of international norms and standards and intellectual property regulations will continue to encourage investment and develop local capacities and technology. We therefore look forward to finding ways to help all States connect with existing technologies during discussions at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 29, jointly with agenda item 123, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", at its 46th to 49th and 56th plenary meetings, held on 7, 8 and 21 November 2013, respectively.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/68/2?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 14 and 118 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The President: I should like to draw the attention of members to the need for an early agreement on the agreed text of the draft resolution on the organization of the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda as soon as possible at the sixty-ninth session. It is my hope that the document will be finalized promptly in order for the Assembly to move forward with the necessary preparatory work for the Summit. In this regard, I will be forwarding the current version of the text to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session for further

consideration and issuance as an "L" document of the sixty-ninth session.

At this stage, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ambassador Petersen of Denmark and Ambassador Aisi of Papua New Guinea, the co-facilitators of the informal consultations on this process, for their dedicated work in guiding the consultations during the current session.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 118.

Agenda item 38

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 38?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 39

Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The President: Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to include this item in its agenda on the understanding that there would be no consideration of this item by the Assembly until further notice.

In connection with the item, I have received a note verbale dated 15 May 2014 from the Permanent Mission of the Comoros to the United Nations requesting the inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-ninth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to include the item entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte" in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 42 to 47

Question of Cyprus

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include items 42 to 47 in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session, in accordance with paragraph 4(b) of the annex to its resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004.

In resolution 58/316, the General Assembly decided that these items shall remain on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State.

Accordingly, these items have been included in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 42 to 47?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: Before proceeding further, I should like to inform members about the status of the consideration of the draft resolution entitled "Outcome

document: the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples".

It is my understanding that Member States would wish to have more time to consider this item. In this regard, I will be forwarding the text to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session for further consideration and action by the Assembly at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Agenda item 85 (*continued*)

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/213/Add.1)

The President: Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 85 to the Sixth Committee.

To enable the General Assembly to consider the item expeditiously, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 85 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

The President: The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities" (A/68/213), which was submitted in accordance with resolution 67/1 of 24 September 2012, and issued in July 2014, was not considered by the Assembly during its current session.

In this connection, I received a letter dated 9 September 2014 from the Permanent Representatives of Denmark and Mexico to the United Nations requesting that the document be considered by the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. May I take it that the Assembly decides to consider the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities, circulated in document A/68/213/Add.1, at its sixty-ninth session under the item entitled "The rule of law at the national and international levels"?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 85.

Agenda item 128

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of agenda item 128 and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 128?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 129 (*continued*)

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

The President: Members will recall that, at its 53rd plenary meeting, on 18 November 2013, the Assembly elected Mr. Koffi Afande of Togo as a member of the International Tribunal for a term of office beginning on 18 November and ending on 31 December 2013.

Members will also recall that under agenda item 129, the Assembly adopted decision 68/416 at its 72nd plenary meeting, on 23 December 2013.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to include agenda item 129 in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include agenda item 129 in the draft agenda of its sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 129?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 149

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of agenda item 149 and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 149?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 153

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of agenda item 153 and to include it in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 153?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 175

Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him

The President: Members will recall that, at its 75th plenary meeting, on 7 March 2014, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of its sixty-eighth session.

In connection with this item, I have received a letter dated 11 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations. The Permanent Representative of Sweden has requested that consideration of this item be deferred to the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly decides to defer consideration of the item and to include in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session the item entitled "Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 175?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 64 (*continued*)

Report of the Human Rights Council

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered this agenda item at its 52nd plenary meeting, on 13 November 2013. Members will also recall that, under agenda item 64, the Assembly adopted resolution 68/144 at its 70th plenary meeting, on 18 December 2013. By that resolution, the Assembly decided, inter alia, to conclude its consideration of Human Rights Council resolution 24/24 before the end of its sixty-eighth session. In that connection, I have received a request to defer consideration of Human Rights Council resolution 24/24 to the sixty-ninth session.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to defer consideration of Human Rights Council resolution 24/24 to the sixty-ninth session.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of Human Rights Council resolution 24/24?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 64.

It was so decided.

The President: I shall now give the floor to those delegations that wish to make statements.

Mr. Townley (United States of America): We wish to return briefly to agenda item 64 and the decision taken moments ago to defer its consideration to the sixty-ninth session. We simply want to state for the record our concern that the agenda item had been closed and was not reopened by the Assembly before it was addressed, and that we were not recognized on a point of order prior to that decision. Our views on the substantive issue are well known, and we believe that further consultations on that important issue should have been held prior to today's decision.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Kaljulate (European Union): Regarding the decision just made concerning agenda item 64, we would also like to put on record our understanding that there were no discussions on that decision, and we would also like to note that our position on the issue is well known.

Agenda items remaining for consideration during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, which have been considered at previous meetings, remain open for consideration during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly: items 9, 10, 14 to 16, 18, 19, 19 (b), 19 (h), 21, 21 (d), 22 (b), 23, 30, 33 (b), 35, 36, 63, 70, 70 (a) to (d), 85, 111, 112, 114, 114 (b), 115, 115 (a), 116, 116 (h), 118, 121, 124, 125, 131 to 135, 137 to 148, 150 to 152, 154 to 165 and 176.

As members are aware, those items have been included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly with the exception of sub-item (b) of agenda item 33, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution"; sub-item (d) of agenda item 70, entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster"; agenda item 133, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013"; and agenda item 134, entitled "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include agenda items 9, 10, 14 to 16, 18, 19, 19 (b), 19 (h), 21, 21 (d), 22 (b), 23, 30, 35, 36, 63, 70, 70 (a) to (c), 85, 111, 112, 114, 114 (b), 115, 115 (a), 116, 116 (h), 118, 121, 124, 125, 131, 132, 135, 137 to 148, 150 to 152, 154 to 165 and 176 in the draft agenda of the sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 9, 10, 14 to 16, 18, 19, 19 (b), 19 (h), 21, 21 (d), 22 (b), 23, 30, 33 (b), 35, 36, 63, 70, 70 (a) to (d), 85, 111, 112, 114, 114 (b), 115, 115 (a), 116, 116 (h), 118, 121, 124, 125, 131 to 135, 137 to 148, 150 to 152, 154 to 165 and 176 at the present session?

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to join everyone here as we mark the closing of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and to be doing so in this beautifully, elegantly renovated General Assembly Hall. I am grateful to all those who have worked tirelessly for this, as well as to Member States for their patience and endurance in supporting and waiting for the reopening of the Assembly. We will have a formal opening on 24 September. Until then, I would just like to make a personal observation about the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, I think you should have the privilege of presiding for at least one day in this beautifully renovated Hall. You have often told me that you have regretted being the only President of the General Assembly in the history of the United Nations who has not been able to sit in the proper presidential chair. So you are presiding in this Hall for the first and last time. You are leaving an important legacy as far as your presidency is concerned, and I thank you for your patience.

We are wrapping up a vital year of work and progress. I commend the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador John Ashe, for his leadership, and would like to express my deep admiration for his vision and commitment. Throughout his presidency, he has led by example, doing his utmost to ensure that the work of the General Assembly proceeded in a highly effective, efficient and timely manner. He is surely one of the most punctual Presidents of the Assembly in United Nations history — and I would again like to thank you very much, Sir, for leading by example.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Vice-Presidents, the Committee Chairs and all those who have been so instrumental in the successful work of the Assembly during such challenging times. This has been an eventful year. We started with a full agenda and consequential tasks — helping to lay the foundations for success in 2015 with the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda and a meaningful new agreement on climate by the end of next year. We also faced many global crises that left the Security Council paralysed, and on which the General Assembly rose to act.

Mr. President, through it all, you demonstrated wise leadership in steering our global discussions towards constructive solutions. You came to the United Nations from a small island with a big capacity for working with other countries. You used your training as an engineer to build consensus. You also brought a longstanding commitment to sustainable development that you translated into results. Your leadership as co-Chair of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development laid a foundation for our deliberations on sustainable development goals.

When the world lost one of its most inspiring leaders, President Nelson Mandela, the General Assembly came together to celebrate his life at a special meeting (see A/68/PV.61). Thanks to the efforts and initiative of the President and the Assembly, the United Nations will always honour and remember Madiba through the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

Through your leadership, Sir, the General Assembly reached out to the world at large, even bringing questions sent through social media into thematic debates and high-level events. Above all, I believe this session of the General Assembly has truly set the stage for the success of the post-2015 development agenda, including through a number of important thematic debates and valuable high-level events. Member States and civil society came together over the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. And progress was fostered through dialogues on a technology facilitation mechanism and the accountability framework.

I applaud all of that action. It will have a positive effect on our collective long-term future, as will your efforts, Sir, to revitalize the work of the General Assembly in order to enhance its responsiveness and better accommodate the needs and demands of Member States. Once again, I thank all those here for their work during this sixty-eighth session. I look forward to the leadership of the incoming President, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, in carrying this work forward over the next year.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I would now like to make a closing statement, and, as can be imagined, I will do it from the rostrum for the first and only time.

We are now at the close of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and this is the last time I will have the singular honour of addressing the Assembly as its President. As I look out across the Hall, I am indeed honoured to see so many friends and colleagues with whom I have toiled in this very Hall — well, not this brand-new one, but we get the picture — in a collaborative effort aimed at addressing global challenges. Those here who know me very well know that I like to keep it short, and here is where I would like to say goodbye and good luck — and that is my farewell speech.

On second thoughts, permit me to share just a few more words with the Assembly as I prepare to hand over to my very able successor, the former Foreign Minister of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

Today is a far cry from that day in June of 2013 when I took — and I counted them — 33 steps from my country's seat to the rostrum to accept the Assembly's acclamation as its President at its sixty-eighth session. As the Secretary-General just said, we are sitting in a renovated Hall, and on that day the Hall in which I accepted that acclamation did not look anything like this. But at the end of the day, the work we did together was neither temporary nor makeshift in any way. We took some decisions that I hope will be lasting. Let

me thank the folks from the Capital Master Plan for giving me the opportunity to stand here before the Assembly — in fact, to put it bluntly, they saved my bacon. Timing in life, as they say, is indeed everything.

I recall that many here — who are still my friends — used to remind me throughout the session that I might very well go down in history as the first President of the General Assembly never to have occupied this rostrum. To them, my friends, I say that they were wrong. I am here in live and living colour on the very last day of my presidency. I could not have got here without their help. That is why, despite the slings and arrows that they have thrown my way, they are still my friends.

However, the question remains — and it is valid — what have I done with the opportunity that Member States have provided? Let me try and answer that question.

On that day in June 2013, I asked Member States to join me in a quest, that is, to turn their attention from the preoccupation at that time with peace and security to another pillar of the United Nations, namely, development (A/67/PV.87). To be more specific, I asked them to join me in setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. Have I succeeded? Only they can answer that question. As we look back over the sixty-eighth session, Member States will recall that, on that date, I told them that I would convene six thematic debates and high-level events and that I would give them the opportunity to tell everyone, including themselves, what they would like to see in the emerging post-2015 development agenda. Member States took me on blind faith. For that, I profusely thank them. We were able to have a full discussion with all stakeholders, including civil society. For the very first time, they were able to feel as though they were part of a journey that the international community was about to commence.

We could turn to the normal metrics that one uses to judge success, that is, numbers. I could tell Member States that, during the sixty-eighth session, the Assemby adopted a total of 300 resolutions and some 80 decisions. However, numbers never really tell the whole story. We know that, in the United Nations context, the whole story is not ever "whole" or a "story". The world is far more complex than that. Let us look beneath the numbers.

We have an opportunity in crafting the post-2015 development agenda to develop something in a collective way that is going to be participatory and inclusive and has as its overarching objective the eradication of extreme poverty. That is no small undertaking and will require a collective effort. It will require Member States to act front and centre in an intergovernmental forum, such as this body.

However, the international community cannot, as Rio+20 adequately showed, do that alone. It needs partners, which it will find in civil society and the private sector. It must meet an accommodation because whatever it ultimately agrees on, the international community will need those partners to help it to implement that agenda if we are ultimately to be successful in that quest. That will require a sea change and a departure from the norm and the way in which we normally do business. We are at the threshold of crafting a new development paradigm. That is going to require a departure from the norm.

Member States will have to make the commitment but they will need partners to help them take whatever they commit to forward, since the sustainable development agenda that they are considering is vastly different from the one that was originally envisaged back in 1992. Tremendous challenges and, indeed, opportunities lie ahead. That is going to require, literally, every shoulder to the wheel.

Within that, the international community will have to pay keen attention to the most vulnerable groups. On the social side, that will certainly include women and young people. For far too long, women have been treated as second-class citizens. Today and henceforth, we hope that that is no longer the case because if, indeed, they compose 50 per cent of the world's population and gave birth to the other half, we can no longer ignore them. They must be full partners going forward.

If this is about the future, we have to include young people, not by just simply telling them that we are planning for them. They have to be involved in the planning because this, ultimately, will be about them. They will inherit the Earth. They must therefore be an integral part of the international community's work as it seeks to craft the new agenda.

Member States achieved a number of other things during the sixty-eighth session. For example, they successfully completed the fourth Biennial Review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and saw the launch of the first-ever United Nations web portal for victims of terrorism.

In social, humanitarian and cultural matters, we also saw a number of important achievements. There was the high-level Declaration that was the product of the High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development (resolution 68/4). There was a renewal of political commitment by our leaders to wrestle against the major health, social and economic threats posed by non-communicable diseases (resolution 68/300) and the subsequent call for strengthened multisectoral approaches for their prevention and control. We achieved consensus in the negotiations on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, bringing to a satisfactory closure two years of protracted consultations.

As we have just heard from the Secretary-General, Member States agreed to establish the Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize in tribute to the extraordinary life and legacy of one of the greatest statesmen and humanitarians whom the world will ever see. That prize will serve not only as a tangible reminder of his service to humankind, but also as a potent inspiration to all who work tirelessly to improve human well-being and bravely confront human hatred, repression and violence.

We also witnessed the unveiling of the winning design for the permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. With the Assembly proclaiming 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent, which is expected to be launched immediately after the general debate of the sixty-ninth session, the descendants of the estimated 20 million Africans who were sold into slavery can now look to the United Nations for a reshaping of the narrative and consequences of that event and discover how new and constructive approaches can be used.

One of my objectives during the sixty-eighth session was to make progress on revitalizing and reforming this institution of ours, and I am pleased that we were able to achieve some progress in that area with the adoption of an ambitious new resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (resolution 68/307), the inauguration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the adoption of a resolution on reforming and strengthening the Economic and Social Council (resolution 68/1), and the adoption of a mobility framework for United Nations staff (resolution 68/265). We now have new institutions that are intended to make the United Nations more relevant, responsive and effective.

The path to reform is one we must still continue to tread, and never more so than on the thorny issue of Security Council reform. While it would be foolhardy to estimate the challenges inherent in getting to a round of real negotiations on Security Council reform, that must be a course of action we should never shy away from. For if we are to attain an organization that is truly representative and fully reflective of its membership of the present day, as opposed to that of decades past, we must, sooner rather than later, seek to make it so. In that regard, I hope that the membership will endeavour to build on the somewhat modest momentum achieved during this session and capitalize on the opportunities that the next and/or future sessions may offer.

I have frequently observed that a man — or woman — may be from an island, but never is an island. And in an increasingly interconnected world, no man or woman who is engaged in a collective enterprise can truly say that he or she walks alone. I would therefore like to thank the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session who have assisted me in the work of the session, and the various Chairs and co-Chairs who have taken up important issues and kept our agenda forward-looking and on schedule. Time is money. And I would like to thank the many facilitators and co-facilitators who have also assisted in this endeavour.

But I would be somewhat remiss if I did not take a moment to praise our Secretary-General, who has steadfastly continued to lead the Organization with skill, dedication and self-deprecating humour; with diminishing resources and an agenda that expands exponentially, all against a backdrop of a world that is fraught with daily crises and seemingly intractable problems. I thank him and his entire Executive Office for all the support they have given me and my team from day one. I would also like to acknowledge the support I have received from virtually all of the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Management, the Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information. But through it all, one, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and its Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Gettu, has been steadfast in its support to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Whatever successes we have achieved they have been an integral part of.

To my own dream team — the men and women of the Office of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, whose professionalism, hard work and dedication have made possible whatever we have achieved during the session — to each and every one of them, I simply say thanks.

Now as I take my leave, I have no greater hope than that our work may empower today's young girls and boys to pursue their dreams and make the difference they want to see in the world, a world that is finally gender neutral. Each of us has a part to play in making that a reality. As I say farewell and pass the torch to my successor, I would like to wish him and his team much success in the sixty-ninth session. I have had my moment, and I would like to thank everyone here for making it memorable.

Agenda item 2 (*continued*)

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We will now observe a moment of silent prayer or meditation. I invite representatives to stand for a minute.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the sixty-eighth session

The President: Before closing the session, I would like to invite to the rostrum the President-elect of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, Mr. Sam Kutesa, to hand over the gavel to him.

I declare closed the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.